HUNGARIAN TALES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE LETTRE DE CACHET."

Une nation fière et généreuse; l'appui de ses souverains—le fléau de ses tyrans.—VOLTAIRE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:
SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT-STREET.

1829.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY SAMUEL MANNING AND CO.
LONDON-HOUSE YARD, ST. PAUL'S.

CONTENTS.

THE

BALSAM-SELLER OF THUROTZER.



THE

BALSAM-SELLER OF THUROTZER.

CHAPTER I.

Would you know what his fault was?—Tom Tackle was *poor!*
DIBDIN.

THERE was a sound and an air of gladness prevalent throughout the little town of Nagy-Börö;—the sun was shining brightly upon the dome of its principal church,—upon the white towers of its numerous monasteries, and the hanging gardens which fringed its mouldering ramparts;—the bells spoke out merrily through the springy air; and crowds of peasants in their red-clocked blue worsted hose, picked their way

daintily through the white plashy pools of a chalky road,—which the April shower still sparkling on the bushes, had converted into a non-navigable canal.

But notwithstanding the sunny smile which irradiated earth and her children,—Nagy-Börö and its inhabitants,—there existed a nook within its limits, whence,—as from the halls of the Inferno,—hope and sunshine were excluded;—a nook as cheerless as despotism's gloomiest dungeon;—the chamber, in short, of the Fiscal of the district, or, as it was commonly termed, the justice-court of the town. In this awful tribunal, a dead and dread silence prevailed; although, being a holiday of the Patriarchal Church, it was amply filled with the idlers of the town;—Hungarians, in their richly-braided pelisses,—Illyrians, wearing a less gorgeous but far more fanciful costume,—and Croats, with their dare-all boldness of brow, and flowing amplitude of attire.

All, however, were silent; and, as it would appear, through the influence of a merciful sympathy; for an Hungarian court of criminal judi-

cature, however ill calculated to waken or foster impulses of Christian virtue, presents at times objects of wretchedness, which might draw tears from Master Launce's "pebblestone of a cur;" and the prisoner at present under interrogation was so sordidly miserable in his appearance, and hopeless in his air, that no human heart could have exulted in the degradation of so fallen a man.

All were silent! The Fiscal had opened the session of the day, by commanding the Haiduck in attendance to bring forth the body of Niklas Barótza,—accused of being accessary to a highway robbery and assault committed three weeks before, in the neighbouring forest of Horösvar, upon the persons of a nobleman and his *suite;*—a crime still fatally prevalent among the Southern provinces, notwithstanding the perpetual warning afforded by the permanent gallows erected in solid masonry at the gates of every free or borough town, which impresses but a gloomy augury upon the minds of travellers. The prisoner, as he was half led, half shoved, towards the table whereon the documents and writing imple-

ments of office were deposited in ominous array, cast a sort of despairing heart-broken gaze around the gaudy assemblage met to luxuriate in his misery; which moved some of the foremost among the gaping crowd to withdraw their contemptuous scrutiny from his tattered dress, and wasted visage. He scarcely seemed to have attained to middle age;—

But careful hours
Had written strange defeatures on his brow;

and the sheep-skin cloak, drawn closely round his meagre body, appeared rather designed to conceal the wretched plight of the garments beneath, than to improve the temperature of an atmosphere which a truth-telling thermometer would have fixed at "stifling heat."

"Stand up, fellow!" said the Fiscal authoritatively, to a wretch deemed unworthy of being classed among the people.* "Stand up, and give an audible reply to my interrogation. Who were your accomplices in your outrage upon the person of the gracious Count Keglovies, on the

* The word *populous*, in the terms of the Hungarian constitution, applies exclusively to the ennobled.

eighteenth day of the past month, in the forest of Horösvar, in the Veröczer comitatus?"

But to "stand up" was a difficult effort, and to "speak audibly" an impossible one to a man who, for three foregoing weeks, had been deprived of air and wholesome food; and who had been withdrawn from his fœtid dungeon on one occasion, only to be submitted to examination by the worshipful Fiscal; and to be condemned thereafter to forty strokes of the stick, publicly inflicted upon the official iron table in front of the justice-hall, in order to amend the contumacy which induced him to persist in declarations of innocence of the crime laid to his charge.

Barótza replied to the Fiscal's interrogation, only by drawing his breath with the deep respiration of one upon whose lungs the upper air produces the effect of a new element; and by bending his haggard looks in supplicatory earnestness upon his judge.

"Prick him with your sabre, Horszt," said the Fiscal to the grim Haiduck who supported the prisoner;—he is dreaming, methinks."

The miserable man was too far gone in the

despair of humiliation, to resent or appear conscious of the hardships practised towards him. If indeed he felt the smart inflicted upon his wasted frame, by the minion of the law's minion, the sensation was only expressed by raising his bony hand to part the long, matted, grey hair upon a brow whereon the beaded dews of debility betrayed the oppression under which he laboured.

"Niklas Barótza," exclaimed the Fiscal, enraged by the prisoner's insulting delay,—delay, that fellest fiend which blows the embers of official impatience,—"I warn you that I speak for the last time. Who were your companions in your assault upon Count Keglovies?"

Niklas moved the parched lips that were scarcely visible amid his untrimmed and grizzled beard, and clasped his gaunt hands together; but the effort, although it brought a faint stream of colour into his wan cheek, produced only the imperfect renewal of his former words, "Alas! I am wholly innocent!"

"This is too much," said the rubicund, well-fed, well-trimmed man in office, twirling his bushy black mustachios, and folding the rich

drapery of his silken symar with an air of dignity. "Officer! convey the prisoner for the second time to the court-yard; where you will inflict upon him forty stripes; nor remit a single stroke, unless he claims the exemption by making an unreserved confession."

There rose a murmur among the crowd. Was it in applause of a cruel and oppressive act? or in compassion towards a defenceless man, who had been arrested on bare suspicion of a crime for which no temptation could be adduced, since his poverty made it evident that none of the booty had fallen to his share; and who had been already visited by that scorpion scourge of judicial tyranny,—probationary torture.

Horszt the Haiduck, to whom the tasks of inflicting cruelty and upholding despotism were the purchase of his daily bread, prepared himself with contented assiduity to execute the duty of the day. He stretched his sinewy arm, as an archer bends his bow, to see that it be tough and in trim for action; and seizing the woe-worn Barótza with one hand, regardless of the big tears that were slowly rolling down his lank cheeks,

he prepared with the other to make way for their passage through the crowd. But this was no easy task; for the mass of human life with which he had to contend was, at that moment, agitated by an impulse of excitement wholly unconnected with the prisoner or his destinies.

"Rumalie!—Rumalie!"—murmured twenty voices at once;—"Rumalie," said the clerk, who was adding a nib to his long swan-quill pen; "Rumalie," exclaimed the Fiscal himself in a tone of satisfaction,—"Rumalie!" growled the very Haiduck, groping at his button-hole for his empty tobacco pouch,—while a Turk,—a well-dressed,—middle-aged,—animated, and very handsome Turk, made his way towards the seat of justice and of the Fiscal; and lightly touching his silken robe with an outstretched hand, kissed, as in respectful obeisance, the finger-tips which had been honoured by such contact.

"*Salve, Domine!*" said the Turk, respectfully addressing himself to the dignified official. "*Et vos, mei fratres et patroni, saluto; commoditatem, prosperitatemque vitæ habeatis.*"

"And how long are you from the frontier,

Rumalie?" demanded the Fiscal, in a sort of interjectional whisper. "What news from Belgrade?"

"The respected Abdul Manhad greets you well, gracious sir," replied Rumalie, in a still lower voice; and taking from the bosom of his vest a small packet, fastened round with a slight cord of crimson silk, he placed it with a significant glance in the hands of the Fiscal.

"So—so," muttered the *employé* to himself. "You are a trusty courier, Rumalie. Come at eventide to my dwelling; and we will confer together, touching the health and the will and the tidings of my respected friend Abdul Manhad."

"Too much honour!" observed Rumalie, renewing with reverence his obeisance. "My sojourn in Nagy-Böröö will not endure till the shadows begin to lengthen; nor journeyed I hitherward save on thine errand. Business recalls me to Fünfkirchen."

"Ay—ay;—the fair,—Rumalie keeps stand at the fair!" was the universal comment of the assembly, with whom the intruder appeared to be an object of common interest and regard.

Rumalie,—the Turk, Illyrian, Greek, Egyptian, Armenian, or Italian,—Rumalie the Moslem, Jew, Christian, or Idolater,—for each he had been considered and called by turns, and with what justice who could decide?—Rumalie, the itinerant merchant,—who, in honour of his garb and dialect, was usually termed the Turkish pedlar, was indeed a personage held in the highest respect and request throughout the country. If he were a Jew, his honesty and open dealing merited that he should be a Chistian; but his faith, his race, his name, were matters of no moment. His frank demeanour, unblemished rectitude, and lofty manliness of mind, were decided and recognized qualifications; and the merits of his wares, the fairness of his bargains, and the interest attached to his pilgrimages, which extended his traffic into countries deemed all but apocryphal in Hungary, rendered his rare visits a general holiday; and the simple country-people hailed his arrival, like that of other birds of passage, as a good omen.

Even in despite of the awful presence of the Fiscal, they now pressed more closely towards

his tray of merchandize than mere curiosity could excuse; and its outward and visible treasures, — flaskets of *rosenöhl* or atar of roses, — amulets of the seraglio, — chaplets of coral and amber, —*mandel seife* in wrappers of gilt paper, — offered but a very humble sample of the real character of his commercial speculations. The initiated among his customers, those gifted with florins or ducats sufficient to unlock the mysteries of his confidence, were however aware that the folds of Rumalie's tunic concealed gems of price, which it had been hazardous to exhibit more publicly, as under his simple guardianship;—rubies from Balsora,—opals as bright and rainbow-hued as ever issued from the ancient mines of Czerwernitza,—pearls even and pure as the fishers of Ormus can supply,—and, precious above all in the eyes of the devout,—relics of matchless sanctity,—and many a *rosenkranz* or rosary, deriving virtues beyond price from having been consecrated in the precincts of the holy Sepulchre itself.

Twice had Rumalie bent his pilgrimage to Jerusalem,—twice had he shaken the dust from

his feet by the waters of Jordan: To him the passes of the mighty Caucasus, and the cedarn forests of Carmel and Ararat, were equally familiar with those of the Carpathians; he had visited Fez and Cairo, Medina and Damascus; he had been, —where had he not been!—and he had fragments of speech, and song, and legend,—and withal a glibness of tongue, and bright intelligence of eye, which added a wild animation to his narratives, and a new grace to the manliness of his athletic frame and jet-black beard.

"Your honourable Lordship will scarcely be pleased to enter just now into communion with Rumalie," said he to the Fiscal, who was fretfully balancing himself in his chair of judgment. "Yonder prisoner seems under examination?"

"Ay—Heaven's curse and mine be upon him," replied the other. "'Tis the villain who shot at Graf Keglovics in the forest."

"That may hardly be, noble sir!" observed Rumalie, "since the Count declared his opponent to have been a *gulya* or cattle driver,—bold of limb, and strong, and daring; and yonder outcast,—a trembler and a coward as all present

may judge,—was at the time of the robbery sojourning in Belgrade. Myself beheld him there; and even then as now, withered by disease and heartstruck by poverty."

"And who constituted you or judge or witness in the case?" interrupted the Fiscal. "'Tis the first time, Rumalie, I ever heard of one of your tribe being admitted evidence in a Christian court of justice."

"A court of *Christian justice*," repeated Rumalie with a salutation whose profound reverence bordered upon irony, "is open to the lowliest of earth's creatures."

"An oath consecrated by the holy Gospels is nevertheless a requisite credential."

"Rumalie may therefore claim a sufficient passport," observed the Turk, no whit discomfited by the inuendo, "as a brother, through baptism, of the Church of Rome."

To find his curiosity upon this long-disputed point thus gratuitously satisfied, was almost a sufficient recompence to the Fiscal, for Rumalie's intrusive pertinacity. "Indeed!" retorted he;—and am I then to understand you as willing to swear that"—

"Niklas Barótza was a dweller in Bosnia, when the Magnat Keglovies was assailed by robbers; nor, until three days thereafter, departed the said Niklas from the city of Belgrade."

"This deposition," said the clerk turning over his notes, "tallies exactly with the former declarations of the prisoner."

"In truth," observed one of the crowd, "the poor wretch appears in too feeble a condition of body, to have provoked the vengeance of a numerous and well-armed caravan."

"So said he in his defence," resumed the clerk.

"Your Excellency will then be pleased to make out his order of release?" demanded Rumalie pleadingly.

"Release! Szent Lorencz forbid! What!—shall the noble Count Keglovics, the patron and lord of half our comitatus, be braved and spoiled here on the very verge of his domain, and the court of Nagy Börö take no single step to avenge the injury?"

"The Count is better aware than court or judge, how far he provoked the evil that fell upon

him,—as your Excellency may chance to know," observed Rumalie, in a low voice. "And has your worship no reply for Abdul and his questioning?" continued he in a still more significant whisper. "The tobacco is packed and afloat—and if"—

"Hein! hein! my good friend Rumalie! a hall of justice is no seat for the money changers. Terms of traffic and barter befit not the passing hour."

But Rumalie, who was willing to pursue the advantage afforded him by his insight into the Fiscal's contraband negociations with the frontier, was deaf to this remonstrance.

"If," he continued, "the Commissary of the Danube can be prevailed on to accept the false invoice in lieu of the fair bill of lading, Abdul Manhad agrees to"—

"Rumalie!" again interrupted the Fiscal, his eyes rolling in their caved sockets with consternation, "as you interest yourself touching the release of the miscreant Niklas Barótza, and have advanced a sufficient plea in his favour, I will presently decree his enlargement,—if you

will undertake to indemnify the town by removing him instantly beyond its jurisdiction."

"Verily I am moved in his favour but as Christianly mercy suggests," replied the Turk. "Nevertheless, as I am about to depart on my way, and as Lanslo's waggon beareth bales of price for me towards the fair of Fünfkirchen, I will adventure to give the ragged slave a cast upon his road to Pesth."

"Release him, Horszt," said the Fiscal with an imperial nod to the Haiduck. "Go,—wretch!—and see thou be not found again within the liberties of our jurisdiction."

"Pitch him into Lanslo's cart, friend Horszt," said Rumalie, with a nod less official, but equally effective. And while the Haiduck in deference to the excellent quality of the pedlar's *Turkische tabak*, diligently executed his command by expediting the astonished and grateful Barótza upon his journey, Rumalie very leisurely replaced the straps of his tray upon his broad shoulders; and kissing the hem of the Fiscal's garment, who bade "God speed him," so fervently as to betray some interest in his speedy departure, the comely

pedlar withdrew from the baffled tribunal of Nagy Börö.

It was late upon the following day that Barótza who, in pursuance of his new patron's instructions, had been comfortably housed, and fed and laid to rest in the inn of the *Rehfuss* at Fünfkirchen, wherein the merchandize of Rumalie was deposited during the period of the fair, awoke from the first easy slumber he had enjoyed for many weeks, to the full enjoyment of that delicious itching, which a philosopher has described as following the removal of fetters. Niklas, who had been heavily manacled, and chained to the damp mildewed wall of a dungeon of which the oppressive atmosphere had hung like a weight upon his soul, could scarcely believe in the reality of his good fortune when he beheld the sun, the actual sun of Heaven, shining upon him through the casement of a well-ordered chamber; and when an aromatic steam of purest Mocha breathed—without metaphor—all the perfumes of Arabia upon his intoxicated senses. But neither the cheering sunshine, nor the morning meal spread upon a table at his couch-foot, had power to arrest his attention.

Rumalie sat there,— Rumalie his deliverer, his benefactor, his friend!—and crawling from his pillow, he fell humbly at the feet of the Turk, and mingled his blessings and thanksgivings with an agony of tears.

"Back to thy rest!—back, friend, back," said the pedlar, attempting to repress his own emotion, and to replace his guest upon the couch he had quitted. "Thou art all too feeble to bear about thy limbs in safety."

And the condition of the debilitated Barótza bore evidence to the accuracy of his observation; for, as he strove to resist, he reeled with the dizziness of weakness and disease, and fell back exhausted upon the bed; while the benevolent Rumalie ministered to his sufferings with the zeal of a kindly host, and the skill of an experienced leech.

"I could have affirmed," faltered the afflicted Niklas, as he drained the cordial held to his parched lips by the Turk, "I could have affirmed that thy draught had been concocted in mine own Thurotzer. Such balsamic medicaments are the boast of my native province; but thou, an alien

from our land, canst scarcely be learned in their mysteries."

"It were a vain thing and a strange," observed Rumalie, whose swarthy brow had reddened at the degrading supposition, "if one to whom the leechcraft of Judea is familiar,—who hath culled his simples on the plains of Mamra,—and disputed with sages in the schools of Mecca, should borrow instruction from the savage Carpathian wilds! Howbeit, as thy palate is something distempered by fever, I can pardon thy lack of discrimination."

Niklas humbly craved forgiveness for his involuntary disparagement of the skill of his kind attendant. "Thou hast it, friend," replied the other cordially. "Be well,—be comforted,—be of good cheer,—and I ask no more at thy hands."

"Little else than gratitude, alas! couldst thou require of me without certainty of disappointment," observed Barótza. "It is fitting thou shouldst know, generous and gracious as thou art, that the wretch on whom thy bounties are bestowed is destitute, friendless, and smitten with

the blight of misery and evil fortune,—even unto the marrow of his bones."

"Friend Niklas!" interrupted Rumalie, whose brow was again suffused with an angry stain, "little will drugs avail, and food still less, to perfect thy recovery, while thy mind remains harassed and ill at ease. Know therefore, and be henceforth at peace in thy troubled spirit, that I am well acquainted with all thy recent calamities. I beheld thine arrival at Belgrade with thy cargo of cotton-seed: I witnessed the conflagration of thy luckless vessel, and grieved over the blackened hulk as it lay cumbering the Danube's surface. At Nagy Börö, I saw thee falsely imprisoned,—inhumanly scourged. I know thy heavy responsibility to thine employers in Pesth,—thy fears, thy present wretchedness; and I say unto thee, be comforted Niklas Barótza; for as my soul liveth, no evil shall be wrought upon thee."

The sufferer waved his head despairingly, but without impatience.

"The course of my traffic," resumed Rumalie, will detain me ten days here in Fünfkirchen.

At the expiration of that time, or my skill is of poor account, thou wilt be restored to health and strength, and mayest accompany me on my road to Pesth; where I will bear witness in the ears of thy employers, my trusty friends the merchants Karlitz, of the blamelessness of thy calamitous ministry in their service. Nay—hear me on, Barótza,—and even from Pesth unto Gran, we may still journey in company; since thy destiny, if rightly interpreted by the Fiscal, leads thee back unto Thurotzer, and mine must shape my course into Austria. Tarry with me therefore during my sojourn in this city, and we will become fellow travellers for a season."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Barótza sorrowfully, "I cannot thus endure to be thy charge and hindrance. I have seen better days; and the lingering pride which they engendered, forbids me to eat my bitter bread unearned."

"If that be thy sole embarrassment," continued the Turk gaily, "*win* thy bread an thou list, and feed thy hungry pride withal; I will give thee labour no less abundantly than food."

"Look on this wasted body," said poor Niklas

—"on these trembling hands;—how may they toil in thy service?"

"Tut—tut! I tell thee thou shalt be speedily healed in body and spirit,—strong, Niklas; strong in sinew as in courage; and by the time thou hast done some justice to the good cheer of the *Rehfuss,* thou shalt become my able assistant and my packsman. How! hast thou numbered years some forty and five, and yet believest that my tender mercies towards thee have been unmotived by views to my own future advantage?—Thou shalt serve me, Niklas"—

"Heaven knows how willingly!" replied Barotza; "but I fear"—

"Fear nothing; thy load will be no weighty charge;—a *kübel* of the spongy soap of Debreczin, for which I find a ready market in the Empire. Therefore, Niklas, I admonish thee to banish all gloomy considerations; so shalt thou best pleasure me, and advantage thyself."

The predictions of the sanguine Rumalie were fully and rapidly verified. Barótza freed from care, became free from disease;—contentment and strength came hand in hand; and the con-

sciousness that his services were of serious benefit to the worthy Rumalie, in the registry of his extensive negociations, and the clerkly adjustment of his concerns, added new vigour to his frame. It would seem indeed, as if a blessing had followed the pedlar's charitable exertions in his favour; for never had the booth of Rumalie with its studded amber tubes,—its mouth-pieces of embossed and enamelled gold,—its flasks of Egyptian ether, censers of sandal-wood, and pipe bowls of keff-kil *—attracted such numerous and liberal customers, as at the fair of Fünfkirchen. Sometimes the merchants of Debreczin and Lemberg, with whom he was engaged in still more extensive financial negociations, would adjourn to his own domicile in order to remonstrate with him upon the grasping tenacity of his bargains,—and Rumalie was in truth, by no means soft-handed in his mode of traffic; but he replied to their murmurs with a hearty laugh.

* *Keff-kil*, or *patual-tush*, known in Europe as *meerschaum*, or sea foam, is a mineral found in Anatolia. In its natural state it resembles a soft clay, and forms an object of commerce between Turkey and Pesth or Debreczin; where it is converted into pipe bowls by means of the lathe; and thence circulated throughout Europe.

"Let a handsome cloak and doublet for the *Herr Secretarius* yonder, who hath registered thy business, prove a make-weight on thy side, and I am content to accept thy first offer," he would say to his discontented customers. Or "dry the ink which our scrivener Niklas has expended on our agreement with a little gold-dust, cross his palm with a broad piece or two, and I concede the point." And thus, instead of humiliating his poor dependent by a gift of money, he contrived to make him earn the means of subsistence and of more seemly array. Barótza was not blinded however by his considerate delicacy; he freely accepted the gifts of his bestowing, as the best evidence he could offer of grateful regard; and when they quitted Fünfkirchen at the appointed time, each bearing a sufficient load, but that of Niklas by far the lighter of the two, terms of perfect confidence and amity were established between them.

A day's march brought them in safety to the banks of the Danube, where it had been agreed that they should lighten their journey by taking passage in a return Semlin baggage-boat,—one

of the shapeless Noah's arks which so disfigure the navigation of that mighty river. By this tedious process they arrived at Pesth in the full freshness of strength; and Barótza, whose apprehensions from the owners of his luckless cargo had kept him in a state of perpetual agitation, was equally astonished and overjoyed to find the merchants Karlitz easily accessible to the assurances and arguments of Rumalie; and content to acquit him of all share in their disaster; even without reference to the official documents which had been granted to him, in exoneration, by the Turkish authorities. One only regret remained to sadden his mind when, after the audit of his accounts with his employers, he quitted the capital;—at Gran he must necessarily part from his benefactor; at Gran he must bid adieu to the sole living being who, for many years past, had vouchsafed to exhibit an interest in his misfortunes; and he expressed the sincerity of his sorrow with such persuasive simplicity, that Rumalie appeared deeply touched, and almost as mournful as himself, when they reached the destined spot, and destined day of separation.

"Nay! friend Niklas," said he, marking the sadness of his companion, as they sat together waiting the return of the flying bridge; "it were inhumanity on my part to grieve thy spirit thus deeply, for the matter of a fifty league journey. I am half inclined to try my fortune at Sz. Marton;—and even an thy Thurotzians be not tempted by my wares, I can perchance become their customer myself. The Carpathian crystals and amethysts are of high account;—and who knows" continued the Turk, smiling significantly, "who knows but I may initiate myself into the mysteries of the balsam trade?"

Poor Niklas, gratified beyond his hopes by the change which deference to his feelings had wrought in Rumalie's intentions, could only repeat his thanks; nor was it until they had fairly crossed the river, and set forth upon their journey towards his native province, that the remembrance of how poor a welcome he should be enabled to bestow upon his generous friend, occurred to sadden the exultation of his soul. As they trudged onwards, side by side, along a road presenting many other charms beside that of ancient and

hallowed association with home, which it possessed in the eyes of Barótza, he could not shake off the consciousness which oppressed his mind; a conscicusness overcoming the influence of lovely weather and still lovelier scenery.

It was the spring-tide of the year;—just at that moment of brief enchantment when summer expands her luxuriant buds of beauty, until their velvet leaves unfold a voluptuous treasury of fragrance amid the light green foliage which has quivered into life beneath the touch of spring;—that moment when every earthly object appears renewed and embellished by the vivifying influence of the balmy breath of Heaven;—when animate and inanimate nature seem to brighten into youth and happiness;—and hope—we know not why,—returns to cheat us with her smiles, and is welcomed with a wilful confidence, which even the gloomy experience of years fails to destroy. The common cares of life,—its ordinary occupations,—seem unworthy to engross the mind in such a season of visionary enjoyment!

"Let us not set up our evening rest in the

gloomy cheerless inn of yonder village," said Rumalie to his weary companion, on the afternoon of their first day of travel. "The moon will rise early to-night to light us on our road; meanwhile let us recruit ourselves on yonder bank, of which the short and tender herbage looks so inviting." They made their way accordingly to a shady slope which, fronting the setting sun, was overhung by the downy and rustling foliage of a group of tall arbeal trees, that attempered the evening beams into a shadowy coolness; and depositing his burden by his side, the Turk proceeded to draw from his stores some light materials of refreshment, while they reposed themselves in delicious languor upon the elastic turf. Clusters of wild cyclamen enamelled its level surface with their pencilled silver leaves, and lilac blossoms; the pale flowers of the wood-sorrel trembled amid their tufts of tenderest green; and the fragrant breezes "wagging their sweet head," betrayed the untrodden beds of violets which lay in secure concealment amid the neighbouring thickets.

"It appears to me," observed Rumalie, after

enduring with patience for a weary space the taciturnity of his fellow traveller, "that this homeward path of thine is haunted by some of memory's spectres; else couldst thou not remain so meditative under the influence of this brightest, fairest, sweetest scene and hour."

"I was considering," replied Niklas, "and Heaven pardon me the sin!—not without grievous bitterness of heart, the varying fortunes which mark thy destiny and mine. Wherever thou goest, prosperity and abundance seem to resort, and the sun of life still shineth. The frowns of the Fiscal,—that petty tyrant of the land,—the grasping exactness of the Pesth merchants, whose avarice hath passed into a proverb, subsided and vanished at the mere sound of thy voice;—at thy persuasion, their wrath was turned into courtesy. But upon *me*,—wretch that I am!—frowns and reviling are showered without remission; and were it not to indulge an unseemly superstition, I should say that I am followed by the influence of an evil eye."

"Nor wouldst thou say amiss,—for poverty is a witch of direst incantations. The beasts of

the forest, nay! even the more domestic brutes will fix their fangs into any creature of their kind upon which another hath fallen despitefully, to worry and destroy. And thus is it also with mankind;—the destitute wretch is made a butt for the shafts of oppression and cruelty;—the miserable appear to invite further humiliation;—and we might sum up the evil qualities we hear ascribed to many an unhappy being, in one expressive word,—he is *poor!*"

"Thou readest the human heart with a discerning eye; nor does prosperity appear to obscure its vision," replied Niklas with a mournful smile. "Still, methinks, some talisman more potent than mere wealth appears to add weight to thy word, and to support thy career."

"Nay! I will borrow no undue importance in thine eyes," answered the Turk, laughing heartily at the air of mystery assumed by Barótza. "The obduracy of the Fiscal gave way, it is true, before my persuasions,—and wherefore?—solely because I am master of his secret,—of his mal-administration of the county revenues,—of his smuggling intercourse with the merchants of Belgrade!—

The bankers Karlitz sacrificed their love of extortion to their desire of retaining the good will of Rumalie,—and wherefore ?—solely because the rich fruits of his industry are guarded in their coffers; and afford them better aid in their extended commerce, than could the paltry price of a bargefull of cotton-seed, even if menaces or imprisonment might have gathered it from amid the wreck of the fortunes of their supercargo."

"Thou hast deigned to give account of thy potent influence," resumed Niklas, "but how wilt thou explain the prevalence of my own evil chance, of *my* luckless destiny?"

The white teeth of the Turk glittered amid his raven beard. "Heardest thou not my confession of faith? Despite the garb I wear," said he, looking scornfully upon the brocaded sleeve of his tunic, "I am no follower of Mahound; and predestination squares not with the doctrines of my church. But pardon me, Barótza; let me not decide unheard upon the nature of thine opinions. The sun hath many hours to waste upon us; and if Rumalie hath something won upon thy confidence, tell him as much of thy

history as may excuse thy despondency, and last out his *tchibouque.*"

As he spoke, the Turk took forth his pipe of jessamine-wood from its velvet casket; and kindling it with a fragment of dried *boletus* tinder, he shortly became enveloped in fragrant clouds;—while Niklas, after some little hesitation, thus unfolded his narrative of afflictions: —

CHAPTER II.

> And what should I do in Illyria?
> My brother,—he is in Elysium!
>
> *Twelfth Night.*

"Thy sentence was a mild one, which comprised the sins and errors of Niklas Barótza in his poverty. Evil, in good sooth, are the fortunes I have to relate; but they form the fitting retribution of evil feelings,—of still more wicked actions! I owe thee, generous Rumalie! a full confession of my faults; and when thou hast heard how bitterly they have been repented, how heavily atoned, thou wilt perchance endow me anew with confidence and compassion.

"My father, who was of gentle race, and possessed of a moderate estate in the Thurotzer county, had no child but myself when, four years after

my birth, he sook a second wife to his bosom, to replace the mother who had died in bringing me into this weary world. I was of a wilful and selfish disposition, even at that early period of my existence; and although I dared not openly rebel against the step-dame he had set over me, and whose discipline was the first to thwart the obstinacy of my character, I looked upon her with secret feelings of detestation. It is a dangerous symptom of mind when a child nourishes a *secret* feeling of any description;—the candour of unsuspecting and unsuspected childhood should be incapable of repressing its emotions. But I *did* conceal my abhorrence of Aloïska;—I even succeeded in disguising the dismay and disgust with which the intrusion of her first-born overcame my heart.

"It was of my own sex,—a boy,—a rival;—and well do I remember that the tears which ran down my father's cheeks, when holding the infant in his arms he pronounced a blessing upon its head, penetrated my bosom like the wound of a sharp instrument;—they were the first I had seen him shed since my mother's

death; and already they appeared to rob me of my birthright.

"Little Gyorgy, despite my hatred, despite the pernicious adoration of both his parents, grew in strength and beauty; and soon became the darling of every heart which I had previously taught myself to believe by exclusive right—my own. He was a dark-eyed, spirited creature,—bounding like a roe through his paternal fields; and his voice had a ringing joyousness in its tones which spoke stirringly to the heart, like the clarion of a trumpet:—while I, who inherited my mother's debility of constitution, grew still more frail through the fretful captiousness of a disposition which rendered my food tasteless, and my pillow devoid of sleep; and which gathered fresh bitterness from the contrast between my own sickly feebleness, and my brother's vigorous and animated bearing. I saw the perception of this contrast marked in the compassionate air with which strangers would inquire my age, after they had withdrawn their admiring gaze from Gyorgy's brilliant boyhood;—I saw it in the mild, tender forbearance which still prompted

my father to overlook the failings of his elder and motherless son; I saw it, above all, in the frank and unenvious impartiality with which my step-mother brought forward, upon all occasions, my claims in union with those of the darling of her heart.

"But the more she protected me—the more my father appeared to strive against his predilection for his youngest born, the deeper, the more intense became my loathing towards my gifted rival; and sometimes when Gyorgy, innocently unconscious of my concealed abhorrence, would force his caresses upon me, and indulge his warm affections by a fraternal kiss, I have secretly turned aside, and spat upon the earth, as though a reptile had polluted my lips by its slimy scales. Sometimes too,—for the God of mercy sends his penetrating touch into the darkness of the hardest hearts,—sometimes the confidence and tenderness bestowed by my brother upon his covert enemy, oppressed my heart with such emotions of shame and terror, that I have seized his hand with a burst of sudden fondness, which I could not explain without self-accusal, and public dishonour.

But in the midst of my penitence, Aloïska would quench my wakening warmth in tears of bitterness, by exhibiting in the full glory of her maternal pride, some merit, or feat, or grace that appeared to distinguish her favourite from his less fortunate brother; or my father would summon him to his knee, and having bestowed upon him the spontaneous endearments of paternal love, would straightway turn his attention towards myself;—as if in atonement for his partiality,—as if urged by a sense of duty. How could I love Gyorgy? He had done more than deprive me of my heritage,—he had robbed me of the affections of my only parent!

"This feeling of mean envy, of bitter jealousy, increased with my increasing years; it was a scorpion which grew with the heart in which it was engendered; and when we became school-mates, I, who as the elder brother should have been his protector and champion, although I dared not openly desert his cause, yet with the refined malice of a demon, I betrayed his thoughtless footsteps into many an evil path; secure through the craftiness of my own cunning, myself

to escape without detection. But while I remained in possession of the good-will and applause of my superiors, Gyorgy by his frank address and generous spirit became equally advanced in the regard and admiration of his young companions, to whom my feeble health, and careful, discontented brow rendered me an object of distrust;—at home,—abroad,—he was equally sure of preference; and already the seers of Thurotzer predicted the elevation and aggrandizement of our family, through the energetic and aspiring boldness of Gyorgy Barótza.

"We were advancing towards manhood, when a relation of my father's, who held an appointment in the Royal Mining College of Schemnitz, generously offered to receive one of us into his family, in order to become a pupil in the *Bergwerks Academie*.

"The prospects opened by this eligible mode of education, either as a civil engineer, as an overseer of the royal forests, or as an aspirant for employment in the mines or mint of Kremnitz, were sufficiently brilliant to insure my father's warm gratitude towards his kinsman, and Aloïs-

ka's instant determination to devote her son to so promising a career. As the elder, and natural inheritor of my father's lands, she appeared to consider me excluded from all participation in the friendly offer; even my father seemed to apply it solely to his favourite son. Yet something whispered to me,— some evil inspiration,—that I was better — far better calculated to profit by the advantages of public instruction than my happier brother. I had already distinguished myself in our provincial classes by my proficiency in mathematical studies, and scientific acquirements. Strong powers of verbal memory and a prevailing taste for experimental philosophy, replaced in my mind the brilliant imagination which characterized the wild and speculative Gyorgy; and so deep was my consciousness of mental superiority, and so earnest my desire to supersede him in his destined appointment, that I totally overlooked the strength of limb and constitution requisite for success in an active vocation. My reflections and opinions on the subject were however of small account; they were undeveloped by any appeal on the part of my parents;—Gyorgy, in

whose sight ink and paper were abominations, departed, nobly equipped, for Schemnitz; and I remained behind, to brood over the conviction that the post from which I was thus excluded, afforded my only future prospect of success and happiness, and to sigh for the golden epaulets and college uniform which had so embellished my brother's graceful person.

"Short however was my indulgence in these dreams of wayward discontent; scarcely was Gyorgy removed from the home in which he was thus dearly cherished, when domestic sorrow filled his place. Aloïska smitten by a sudden fever, drooped, sickened, and died, before her son could be summoned back to receive her parting blessing; and even my hardened heart was profoundly touched by beholding my step-mother stretched on an untimely bed of death, and removed from the diligent execution of her matron duties, and the intense enjoyment of her happy prospects, into the darkness of a noisome grave. I grieved too to note the yearning of her heart after her absent son; and had she *then* appealed to my feelings in his behalf, and bespoken my

brotherly tenderness for his inexperience, I should have promised all she required, and honourably kept my word. But so absorbing was her conviction of Gyorgy's supremacy, that her dying benediction actually enforced the assurance of her son's *protection!* 'Weep not, dear Niklas,' said she; 'while Gyorgy lives thou wilt never want a friend; the goodness of his heart is my surety for thy future happiness.' Revolted by her blind partiality, my spirit festered anew,—I followed her to the grave without a tear.

"My father's grief was deep, reverent, and intense; but attempered, by increase of years, into that holy confidence of speedy re-union with those who are gone before, which forbids all vehement indulgence of distress. Circumstances of the strongest national interest tended also to mitigate his sorrows. I have said but little touching his character, for it is of myself I have undertaken to speak; and I am conscious that his opinions have very insufficiently influenced my own. Thus much however I must premise, in elucidation of my history; that the prevailing passion of my good old father was an intensity

of national devotion,—of patriotism, which animated his every pulse, his every thought, his every action; and that among the numberless Hungarian bosoms which the edicts and oppressions of the Emperor Joseph filled with indignation and dismay, at the epoch to which I allude, none beat with a sense of prouder resentment than his own.

"With myself,—I own it to my shame!—the love of my country hath ever been a secondary impulse. Patriotism is a virtue inherent in the ardent and the prosperous; and as my selfish mind could picture skies more bright than those of Hungary, fields more fertile, and a home where truer happiness might await me, her destinies roused no tumult of excitation in my breast;—the paternal mantle appeared to have descended unrent and undiminished upon my brother. *He* had a heart for the country of his fathers,—a voice to uplift in her cause,—an arm to raise in her defence. It was to him my father loved to breathe his lamentations; it was Gyorgy who re-echoed all the curses which every fresh importation of German laws, and German

legislators, wrung from the depths of his father's heart, and from the lips of an outraged nation. Nothing indeed but the iron arm of military despotism could have repressed the revolutionary spirit which agitated, at that critical period, the mass of the Hungarian people, against measures equally unconstitutional, and new to their endurance; measures betraying in the character of Joseph, that love of arbitrary power which, — as it equally distinguished the numerous children of Maria Theresia who were destined to fill European thrones,— was probably subdued in her wiser self by early reverses, and by long experience in the art of government.

"The national language had been ejected from the tribunals and institutions of the land; its costume had been denounced as an ensign of rebellion; its independent counties had been converted into circles of the empire,— its religious communities dissolved, dispersed, and their revenues appropriated by the Emperor,— the Regalia of the kingdom had been torn from its ancient sanctuary, to be polluted by the common touch of Vienna,— a capitation tax was in peremptory

process,—and a bastille already reared its menacing and grated brow on the shores of the Danube! Judge what were the emotions of my father and brother!—judge whether the swords of the magnats were restless in their scabbards! Rumours of insubordination, mingled with appeals to the memory of Ragótski, reached even unto that Imperial bed of sickness, on which the misjudging originator of the evil lay within the clutch of a tyrant mightier than himself. The milder policy of his ministers prevailed; and as a first concession to the remonstrances of the Hungarian nobility, the consecrated crown of St. Stephen was rendered into the hands of the Commissioners, delegated by the Diet to deposit it once more within the towers of Buda.

"Ill canst thou imagine the fervour, the tumultuous stir of exultation, with which the nation celebrated its triumph! A solemn ovation did honour to the sacred relic on its passage from the frontier unto Ofen; and every living soul rushed forth from palace and cabin, to offer a reverential homage by the way. Among the enthusiasts of the hour, my brother, whom five years of application

had placed in the highest class of the *Kaiserliche Königliche Academie,* without diminishing his political ardour,—my brother was rash enough to absent himself from Schemnitz, in company with a chosen band of the students who shared his opinions, in order to join the procession which welcomed the commissioners of the crown to the gates of Raab; where the Cathedral had been brilliantly prepared for the reception of the Regalia during the night.

"His return to the college was not so long delayed but that the consequences of his imprudence might have been averted, or terminated by a short arrest, had not my letters incited him to a public declaration of the motives of his absence; and to a bold profession and defence of his political opinions, and detestation of German oppression;—which, as might naturally be expected, were instantly followed by a sentence of expulsion! He arrived at home discomfited, but not subdued in spirit;—my father was unfortunately absent, and once more my evil counsels prevailed upon Gyorgy to avoid the first ebullition of his anger, by a temporary sojourn with an acquaint-

ance at Tyrnau. I supplied him,—malicious liberality!—with the entire fruits of my boyish parsimony; and having oppressed his mind by anticipations of my father's fury on this premature blighting of his temporal prospects,—I hastened him over the threshold. My brother! my ill-starred, my noble brother! I never looked upon his face again!"

"But thy father," interrupted Rumalie, now for the first time seeming to interest himself in the narration. "What said thy father to his absence?"

"The tidings of his favourite's disgrace were received with equal astonishment and regret; for the motive of his expulsion was cunningly omitted in the official German circular forwarded by the college."

"But *thou* didst suggest the cause?" demanded the Turk, "thou didst excuse his offence as consequent upon the influence of his sire's transmitted principles?"

"And thus bestow upon my brother the honours of martyrdom in my father's eyes,—of martyrdom in his favourite cause,—the cause of

national freedom? No! thou must imagine that a heart such as mine,—that the state of mental delusion under which I laboured, could scarcely prompt me to such an act of magnanimity!—Yet how shall I dare,—even unto thee, a stranger,—reveal the horrible cause I assigned as that of Gyorgy's disgrace?—I told him,—I told my wretched father,—ay, and even by a forged letter confirmed the accusation, that his son,—the darling of his age,—had been detected in peculation of the Imperial ores, which, as deputy-warden of the assay laboratory, had been consigned to his charge; and that the respectability of his connexions, and his previous good character, had alone redeemed him from being publicly branded as a felon, and a thief!—But what ails thee?" exclaimed Niklas, interrupting himself, as Rumalie uttering a sharp cry, pressed his hand upon his heart.

"A reptile,—some crawler of the dust, hath stung me through my vest," faltered the Turk. "But say on;—the interest of thy tale will overcome my passing anguish. Thy father—did he —*could* he give credit to so vile an accusation?"

"Rather inquire whether he could suspect brother of fabricating such a charge against brother. He *did* believe me,—and in the heat of his rage, he addressed a letter to his unfortunate son, which, although it contained little more than his malediction, and a command to depart instantly from out the land, fully answered my worst of purposes!

"Yet believe me,—if still thou canst give faith to the words of a being so depraved,—believe me that scarcely was this letter despatched upon its cruel mission, scarcely had I learned from Gyorgy's reply that he had already departed on some distant and nameless pilgrimage, when a profound repentance took possession of my mind. Despair had rendered it wicked and inhuman; the success of my projects brought back its better, its softer impulses! But all was now too late!—What would it have availed to undeceive my father, and to convince him of his injustice towards an innocent son, whom I could no longer bring back into his bosom;—whom my machinations had rendered a friendless, homeless wanderer over the wide earth? To

have confessed my sin would have been but a renewal of cruelty towards my father.

"And, oh! how bitter was the endurance of my secret sorrow,—how overwhelming my silent sense of crime,—my penitential atonement! Wherever I turned my eyes, they were greeted by the image of my brother; and the confiding tenderness of his farewell words, lingered in my ears like a death-knell! At table, his chair seemed always full;—in the very temple of God, his phantasm appeared to kneel by my side;—in the open field it pursued me like a shadow;—nor for worlds would I have trod beside his mother's grave. And in the watches of the night,— those nights which the wintry tempests made horrible with their uproar, a still small voice perpetually rose above the yelling of the hurricane,—a still small echo of the Hebrew's sentence of judgment. '*Where is thy brother?*' said the deep voice of ages.

"'Am I my brother's keeper?' was the reply of the Heathen murderer! but *I* who had been nurtured in a better creed, sank rebuked and afraid at the imaginary sound. Even in my

solitude, I shrouded my face, and trembled as I listened;—I *had* been my brother's keeper,—and I had betrayed my trust!

"For many years previous to his recent domestic calamity, my father's sight had been failing; but its latest exercise was in writing that fearful letter to his darling child. His eyes grew dim from that very day,—he never saw clearly again! I did not *observe* him indeed indulge in tears; but the winter nights were long, his chamber solitary; and who can tell how far secret weeping may have tended to obscure his vision? This gradual decay soon ended in total eclipse,—in utter blindness; and from that period he resigned the entire management of himself and of his estates into my hands. This new responsibility, instead of gratifying my feelings, by the independence and supremacy for which I had sighed so long, served but to oppress me with new anxieties; and it was chiefly in the hope of interesting my troubled mind by the formation of new ties and the indulgence of new affections, that I resolved to unite myself in marriage with the sweetest and loveliest of my young companions at Szent Marton.

"Urszlá deserved a better fate than to be selected for such a purpose; for good and fair as she was, her original charm in my eyes had been her repeated rejection of my brother's boyish suit. Perhaps he pressed his ardent love too vehemently upon her timid acceptance; for he was surely better gifted to secure her happiness than the miserable wretch in whose bosom she pledged her faith! We married,—I became a father; Urszlá who was the gentlest, the most assiduous of wives, was the sweetest mother too, on whose devoted tenderness my eyes had ever rested. But even the observation and possession of her faultless beauty, could not animate the heart upon which conscience, like a clinging incubus, hung heavy and terrific. And other evils soon began to assail me.

"I have already alluded to my disinclination and inaptitude for a life of agricultural activity; and the deteriorated condition of my father's estates soon bore evidence to my mal-administration. The most valuable produce afforded by our land, from time immemorial, had been the poppies and saffron required in the balsam trade

of the country; and it chanced that my unfortunate brother in the early ardour of his chemical studies, had suggested a method of turning them to better account; which, without a sufficient insight into his views, or a sufficient capital to support preliminary failures, I attempted to put in practice,—and totally without success. The product of the year, our sole resource, was lost to us at once! Our independence and hereditary nobility proved a grievous burden on this occasion; for the vassals of a noble house have recourse to their *suzerain* for assistance under such contingencies; receiving an advance of corn upon the promise of the ensuing harvest, or a trifling loan which they repay with *robot*, or personal service.

"But the Barótzas are unhappily of gentle blood; and our common necessities obliged me therefore to become a debtor,—again and again, and soon without hope of repayment; for what accession of revenue was to relieve from embarrassment an income merely sufficient for our maintenance? And every thing seemed leagued against a possibility of relief. Storm and alternate drought laid waste the province,—pestilence

deprived me of my peasants,—disease swept away my herds,—and ruin and devastation prowled amid my solitary fields. The poverty consequent upon such visitations, I could have borne in patience; for my children might have been nurtured in the humble lowliness befitting their altered degree;—but it was for my father alone, my poor, blind, bereaved, decrepid father, that I dreaded the horrors of privation. Two of his grandchildren indeed served and tended him with a patient gentleness which they inherited from their mother;—they had been named at his desire after the two beings he had most loved,—Gyorgy and Aloïska; and the old man appeared to hold them the dearer for that sad association.

"My elder son, Johan,—I have delayed too long to speak of him, but the wounds of a father's heart are sorely painful in exposure,—my first-born son appeared to unite the beauty, and boldness, and ardour of his lost uncle, with the craftiness and cruelty of his far more wretched parent. From his boyhood he was dauntless and shameless,—a braggart and a spendthrift;—from his boyhood he appeared destined to heap upon

my head, those burning embers which I had wickedly kindled for another;—yes! it was the thanklessness of my child which avenged most deeply, most bitterly, the injuries of my slandered brother!

"Dream not, however, that in my earlier hours of wedded happiness, or in the transient snatches of prosperity which delayed my ruin, I had forgotten for a single hour, his absence or its cause. Never did any glad tears of welcome fall upon the cheek of my new-born children, that the memory of *his* infancy came not to sadden my rejoicing; never did I note exultingly the dawning of their better qualities and manly spirit, that Gyorgy's fair presence and noble mind came not painfully mingled with the recollection; never did their embraces thrill through my frame with that touch of ecstasy known only to a parent's heart, that the image of my brother,—of him whom I had deprived of the precious ties of home and kindred, —rose not like a spectre before my eyes. Why —why could I not call it into life!

"I have told thee that we were poor—oppressed by difficulties and misfortunes," conti-

nued Niklas, fetching a heavy breath, "judge then whether the lavish profligacy of my son tended to redeem my embarrassments! Yet,—extrême in love as in hate,—my doating tenderness for the unhappy boy, prevented me from admonishing his early follies, from repressing by paternal authority his maturer vices. Poor as I was, I supplied him again and again from my limited means, when dissipation and ill fortune reduced him to distress; he had persuaded me to place him in the Imperial army, and our little stock was frequently exhausted, and our hunger left uncared for, in order to improve his appearance in the world. But this could not last;—a necessity for disposing of our family estate became apparent."

"And thine old father, Niklas! How couldst thou obtain his consent to so humiliating a measure?"

"The tears of my wife and children found their way to his withered heart. He conditioned but for the retainment of the dwelling wherein he had first and last beheld the light of heaven; —and the sacrifice was achieved."

"And thou wert once more free?"

"Condemned by the law of the realm to place my lands at the disposal of the nearest magnat, I scarcely obtained a third of their value; and even that sum speedily melted away under the selfish demands of my son Johan. One relief was however vouchsafed to us by Heaven;—my aged father died about this period. I say *vouchsafed*,—for how could I endure to see him stripped of all his comforts by the profligate extravagance of my son; he who had been despoiled of the best joy of his existence by my own still more wanton cruelty? Yes! he died;—and the first unembittered tears which had blest my eyes since Gyorgy's departure, were those I shed upon his coffin!

"And that beloved name was the last word that trembled on his wasted lips—'Blessings be upon the castaway!' said he, in his dying prayers,—'the blessings of his father and of his God!' And the smile with which he spoke went with him into the depths of the grave.

"But I speak in vain," said Niklas, interrupting himself on perceiving that the Turk lay

extended on the earth, with his face buried in the grass. "He sleeps!—my benefactor is wrapt in slumber;—peace be with him! It was presumptuous to imagine that my tale could interest his feelings."

CHAPTER III.

Juste ciel! il y en a deux.
The French Ghostseer.

DURING the whole of the following day, the intercourse of the travellers was disturbed and thwarted by the unsettled humour of the sky. The weather, like a spoiled beauty, was one moment radiant with gracious smiles,—and the next, overclouded by sullen shadows; and at the very moment that the rain-bow—that peace-maker of Heaven,—began to spread its concilia-tory arch over the laughing,—conscious skies, the playful snatches of balmy air which agitated the branches as if in gratulation, would be-come irritated by sudden caprice into angry gusts; and sweep with threatening vehemence

among the blossoms that had already opened anew their fragrant censers of sacrifice.

It was a sabbath-morning, too; and the peasant girls, who were clad in holiday array, were seen scudding in groups along their road from church; shrouding their laughing faces from the momentary showers, under the cover of their scarlet skirts; or sheltering themselves here and there among the rifts of sand, beneath some straggling juniper bush, or stunted pine tree, from the pelting rain that pattered over their tangled green awning. Even the hardy Rumalie and his companion were forced to be on the alert against the sudden violence of the passing storms; and to own that the season was not propitious for gossipping.

But on the third day, when the petulant winds had fretted themselves to rest, a mild and holy calm overspread the freshened face of nature; and the wanderers rested themselves at mid-day in a thick grove of pinasters, which overhung the ravine they were traversing; reposing in voluptuous indulgence upon a rich carpet of the greenest moss, which the brooms of the neighbouring

peasants, seeking fuel in the woods, had disencumbered of its fir cones and decaying fibres. No sound broke in upon their lonely *siesta* but the distant murmur of the wood-pigeons, or the carol of a passing thrush; till Rumalie suddenly rousing himself from a fit of abstraction, exclaimed, "and thy wife, Barótza,—thy daughter, —thy two sons,—tarry they still at Szent Marton?—and what strange chance impelled thee unto Belgrade?"

"The departure of my boys from Thurotzer," replied Niklas, gratified to observe that his apprehensions of having excited the hatred and disgust of his benefactor, were unfounded, "preceded my own. It is now two years since my unfortunate Johan accompanied his regiment to Naples;—and shortly afterwards Gyorgy, who so long as my father could be comforted by his presence was content to be detained at our fireside, implored my permission to try his fortunes in the world. He had witnessed too much domestic humiliation to be ambitious; and having from his earliest years devoted his leisure to the cultivation of our provincial art, and with considerable success, my

boy, poor and friendless, and with pitiful resources, but ardent, and courageous, and hardy in temperament, set forth upon his weary wanderings *as a balsam-seller*. His mother and sister saw their last comfort vanish with the trace of his footsteps in the snow; and on the succeeding spring our desponding hearts were confirmed in their gloomy forebodings, by tidings of the violent death of my elder son. For some weeks we endured the suspense of an unconfirmed rumour; but at length I ceded to the prayers of his sorrowing mother, and taking my staff in my hand, I departed for Pesth; to seek an interview with his agents, of the house of Karlitz.—The tale that had reached us was, alas! but too fatally true! my misgoverned Johan had fallen in a duel with a Neapolitan officer—he was already dead,—buried,—forgotten; and I had only to return to my desolate hearth to add another page to my record of misery, and to witness the heart-broken smiles of my patient, my forbearing Urszlá.

"No! I could not endure to think of my return,—I could not! But by letter I told her all;—and acknowledged that the Karlitz family had

taken pity upon my wretchedness, and granted me temporary employment. As thou already knowest, they had commissioned me to visit Turkey, and negociate a speculation in cotton-seed for the stalled cattle upon their arid lands at Ketschkémet. How ill my journey sped is also unhappily known to thee; and even my earnest trust and chief inducement,—that of crossing the path of my surviving son, among the southern provinces, was totally disappointed. While as if in wanton aggravation of my affliction, I was seized in traversing Veröczer, on suspicion of highway robbery,—imprisoned, beaten, persecuted; and on no better grounds than that I was poor and friendless, and could bring no witnesses of the truth of my defence. Yet as I stood, a condemned man and an humbled, before the tribunal, how could I resent injustice,—how resist severity?—*I*, upon whose withered mind, the consciousness of crime was indelibly impressed!"

"And thy wife and daughter, Niklas,—know they of thy recent mischances?"

"They await our coming with impatience. From Fünfkirchen, I wrote to prepare them for the reception of my best of friends."

"That was ill done! I had hoped to surprise their welcome and good-will."

"Their welcome, my gracious benefactor, must be limited by poverty and affliction."

"That of a kindly heart might befit a king."

"Nevertheless, so sorely do I dread thine impatience of our poor accommodations, that I would willingly lengthen our road through Kremnitz, and the wide district of our mines; in order that gratified curiosity might blind thine eyes, by a vision of the glory of Hungary, unto the wretchedness of Barótza's home."

"The glory of Hungary!" interrupted Rumalie. "My good friend Niklas, look around thee! Look on the wooded ravine at thy feet,—at yonder crags which lift their noble fronts unto Heaven, above thy head! Look at these budding vineyards spreading from slope to slope,—and tell me not of the beauties of mines or caverns! Besides, what have these golden pits of thine to boast, which can match with those of Transylvania?—Boïtza have I visited—and Nagyag;—have seen the tellurium glitter in the yawning entrails of the earth, and"—

"Nay—gracious Rumalie," exclaimed Niklas, "an thou hast visited the golden treasures of Boïtza,—I speak no more of Schemnitz; I have no further delay to urge. Yonder in the horizon I discern the looming of a city,—of mine own Sz. Marton;—and two leagues beyond,—in a valley sheltered by yon glimmering hills, stands the habitation of my fathers."

Barótza uncovered his head in salutation to a spot so consecrated in his estimation; and Rumalie, either in listlessness, or to rid his companion of the restraint of his observation, beguiled their onward way by lifting up his voice in wild fragments of many a Turkish ballad, or Moorish ditty; one of which bore the following interpretation.

BALLAD.

I.

Across the trackless desart, ride
A Moslem and a Frank,
To spread their evening tents beside
The well-spring's shaded tank;—

Brief rest, though sweet!—long ere the sun
Glares fiercely forth, again
Their twilight course perforce they run
Athwart the sultry plain.

II.

Lo! as they pass, the rustling reeds
Quiver, where—gliding soft—
A snake uncoils its spotted weeds,
And rears its crest aloft!
Bismillah! with an arm of strength
The Frank hath aimed his blow,—
Flings high in air its mangled length,
Then dashes it below!

III.

"What hast thou done?" the Moslem cries,
"Thy ruthless hand hath slain
A thing great Allah from the skies
Breathed on without disdain;
It had not harmed thee,—could not harm
Thy courser in his speed!—
Away!—thine act—thy heart—thine arm
Have shamed thy Christian creed!

IV.

" Through the wide world, the reptile race,
  Like man, have harbour given ;
But who shall dare assign the space,
  Their heritage from Heaven ?
Will not that God thy deed condemn,
  Whose power,— intent to bless,—
Fashioned the wilderness for them,—
  Them for the wilderness '

V.

" Go ! in the meanest thing that lives,
  Revere its Maker's hand ;
And reverence the will which gives
  To all— a promised land !—
To all, his sheltering care !— and know
  That, through a just decree,
The mercy which thou lov'st to show,
  Will be vouchsafed to thee !" *

* Founded on the Turkish Ambassador's reproof to Dr. Clarke, as they journeyed together from Constantinople.

It was evening, when the weary travellers reached the valley in which Vehlhá, the village formerly belonging to the Barótza family, was dotted, white and tranquil, like a scattered flock amid the green pastures. A few of its lowly habitations appeared to have wandered still higher up the hill-side, where its house of prayer, like the shepherd of the fold, stood high above the rest, overlooking its charge; — and on the same level, the Barótza dwelling-house, half farm, —half mansion,—extended its white front amid a plantation of larches. The purple shadows of the deepening twilight which now obscured the face of things, prevented its dilapidated condition, and the furrows that time had ploughed upon its aspect as roughly as upon that of its master, from becoming degradingly apparent; and as the wanderers approached its northern entrance, between tufts of larch and lilac trees, which rendered the air oppressively sweet by their fullness of bloom, there burst from the bushes such a thrilling concert of nightingales, as, united with the stillness of the clear, calm sky, and its one intense evening star, forbade all observation of meaner objects.

The pilgrims crept towards the windows; and through the mouldering *jalousies* which hung loosely on their broken hinges, they plainly discerned by the light within, the gentle Urszlá patiently seated beside it, in her mourning weeds; and Aloïska leaning her still fairer cheek upon her mother's shoulder, whispering sanguine predictions of her father's early return. The interposing figures of the travellers obscured the lingering evening light, and the disturbed inmates instantly rushed forth in anxious inquiry —and were not disappointed;—in another moment they were alternately clasped to the bosom of the agitated Barótza.

Rumalic, in deference to their emotion, tarried afar off; but when Niklas, recovering his self-possession, named him as his benefactor and best friend, the eager Aloïska flew towards him, and would have pressed his hand to her lips, had he not prevented her with words so kind, and breathed in broken tones so touching, that Urszlá started from her husband's arm, as though they were familiar to her ear. It was but a gloomy welcome home. So many grievous remembrances,

—so deep a sense of actual misery tended to sadden the meeting,—that not one of the little group could even affect a tone of rejoicing; it seemed a general relief when the Turk, pleading fatigue, begged permission to retire to repose.

Niklas Barótza, lamp in hand, and guided by Aloïska's whispered directions, conducted his guest into a roomy but almost dismantled chamber; and as they crossed the threshold, he once more, and very humbly, welcomed him to the shelter of his desolate abode.

"I feel," said he, "that this scanty furniture is insufficient to offer for a stranger's accommodation; yet poor as it is, not only is it our best, but very sacred in our eyes. My old father drew his last breath in yonder bed;—this cumbrous arm chair is that before which my brother and myself were wont to kneel in our childhood, for his nightly blessing!—Beside it, sir, lieth the ebony spindle of my stepmother; and Gyorgy's broken cross-bow hangs yonder, beneath the calvary." Niklas drew his hand across his eyes; then hastily saluted his guest. "Sleep well, gracious sir;—be your rest untroubled as theirs,—

your waking more joyous than mine!" And so saying, he withdrew mournfully from the chamber.

Rumalie listened until the echo of his footsteps ceased in the lonely gallery: then drew bolt and bar; and throwing himself on his knees before the bed, he lifted up his voice and wept!

"My father!" faltered he at length, amid his broken sobs, "my mother! do these perishable records alone survive ye?—do these frail tokens of my childhood exist,—and are *you* shrouded in the earth? My father! thou who in thy dying hour, didst pardon my imputed crime,—thou—oh! my mother,—who didst love me all too tenderly for my happiness—look down on my return! Accept the reverence, the deep, fond reverence of your alien child;—forgive the unmeant offences of my boyhood,—forgive, for my sorrow's sake, my brother's cruelty! Hear me!—father,—mother,—from the grave which I have come so far to visit and to honour,—oh! hear me, and bless my desolate return!"

Even Niklas and his family, who outwatched the stars that night in their mutual communi-

cations of suffering and sorrow, slept more, and more peacefully, than their guest. As soon as the watchmaster of the village had droned the last Psalm at sunrise under his window, Rumalie went forth in secret, into the valley, and ere other eyes were waking to pry into his movements, he had breathed his morning prayer upon an obscure grave within the cemetery of Vehlhá. In his wanderings through the village, he outstaid the morning meal of his hosts; but he was more than privileged in their eyes; and when he did indeed return, Urszlá herself went forth to meet him by the way; and to renew his welcome of the preceding evening with an increased cordiality that brought tears into his eyes. That voice of hers,—with how many touching associations did it thrill upon his heart!

In the course of the day, Rumalie's feelings were again and again excited by the grateful regard and emotion evinced, throughout the valley, unto the family which had been compelled by ruined fortunes to resign its lordship into the hands of strangers. The villagers observing that a guest had been welcomed in the dreary hall of

Vehlhá, and eager to assist the scanty stores of their former master, hastened to bring homely tokens of their respect to mend his frugal fare. Game — vessels of ewe-milk *schmalz,* — baskets of crimson salad, the earliest of the year, — wood strawberries, by their German name of earth-pease, — flasks of Sirmian wine, or a few ancient bottles of Tokäyer, of the Gyorok vintage,— were forced upon his acceptance; while the most stirring damsels of the valley vied with each other in tenders of aid and good offices to the adroit and active Aloïska,— the flower of the district. And thus furthered in their desire to render the welcome of Rumalie as warm as Hungarian hospitality could suggest, the family of Barótza received his offer of a prolonged visit with the frankest cordiality.

Niklas alone,— although he had been the first to bespeak the services of his wife and daughter for his generous friend, would have been contented to moderate their growing friendship. From the second day of the Turk's domestication under his roof, he had been startled by a suspicion of having detected looks of intelligence

between his daughter and his guest; nay! even Urszlá herself seemed moved to regard the stranger with an air of interest more tender than was altogether satisfactory to her husband. His mind was not yet wholly untainted by the leaven of his early infirmity; and a degree of unquiet jealousy sometimes prompted him to break in unexpectedly upon the little group, as they sat together under the broad shadows of the plane-trees. Yes! their animated discourse was suspended instantly upon his appearance,—an air of confusion and consciousness prevailed among them when he fixed his eye upon each several countenance;—the fact was indisputable! But was it possible that his gentle Urszlá, that his proud and hitherto disinterested girl,—could be so very quickly and powerfully influenced by the casket of balass' rubies, and the bags of sequins which Rumalie had given unto their safe-keeping?—Could Aloïska have so soon forgotten her engagement, her very betrothment, with the son of the Lutheran pastor of Vehlhá,—young Vinzenz, who only waited an increased stipend in his diplomatic appointment at Vienna, to

claim her as his bride? Niklas cursed in his secret soul the frailty of woman, as he bewildered himself by these perplexing considerations; and once, when he had surprised the dark eyes of the Turk fixed in mournful intensity upon his still beautiful wife, he even wished himself back in the dungeons of Nagy Börö,—so Rumalie were still hawking his wares in Transylvania, or beyond the Bosphorus!—

He even detected the scornful appellation of "Turkish pedlar" lurking, upon several occasions, between his own compressed lips; and although he drove back from his heart the bitter thought that urged it, and banished the ungrateful word, as unbecoming and offensive, yet was he never better pleased than when his guest proposed that they should profit by the loveliness of the season and depart from Vehlhá, upon a tour among the Carpathian mountains; where Rumalie trusted to turn his experience in the gem and crystal trade, to good account. Bárotza earnestly acceded to the request; and in a few days the dangerous Turk had bid adieu to his rival sultanas,—and had left Szent Marton far in the distance.

The first station of interest to which their journey was directed, was the obscure village of Czerwenitza; where alone, of all Europe, the native opal is found in its full pride of radiance, embedded in a stratum of decomposed porphyry. The archives of this precious mine are said to be of five hundred years standing; and are in themselves worthy of attention. But Rumalie, prompt in all his dealings, was soon ready to proceed on their enterprize; and before they had passed many days in the solitary wilds they were compelled to traverse in order to reach Galicia, terms of the happiest understanding were once more renewed between them, and Barótza appeared to have forgotten all his ungenerous suspicions and discontents. Few things, indeed, tend more to strengthen the bonds of intimacy than a perilous and laborious journey. Peevishness and *ennui* confine themselves to turnpike roads, smoothed by Macadam; but crags to be surmounted,—forests to be traversed—dark, pathless pine-forests, sacred to the wolf and the bear,—fagots of *krummholz* or knee wood, to be gathered for a watchfire,—provisions to be hus-

banded, and scantily shared,—fatigues and privations, and dangers, to be endured in common, form a tie of mutual interest, very favourable to the growth of friendship. And thus it was with our Carpathian wanderers, during their pilgrimage among the mountain ravines, and their sojourn in the elevated but lovely region of the Green Lake; and there, in their prolonged interchange of thought and feeling, Barótza became deeply and unaccountably sensible to the peculiar charm he had found in the air, and voice, and sentiments of the Turk, during their earlier acquaintance;—one of those prepossessions which sometimes beset our hearts with an overcoming influence,—

> Striking the electric chain wherewith we are darkly bound.

Niklas, however, was incapable of sustaining the fatigues which his more ardent companion was eager to encounter; and soon, in the languor of indisposition, he began to sigh after those beloved inmates of Vehlhá, who were so much better skilled to minister to his sufferings than the rude bear-hunters of Käsmark. The object of their mountain-tour had been happily accom-

plished in an abundant acquirement of the double sexagonal crystals, which are to be found amid those inaccessible wilds; and yet Rumalie appeared intent upon devising new excursions, and seeking fresh objects, like one who is bent upon loitering out an appointed season; nor was it till after repeated hints, and at length earnest entreaties, that he would consent to their immediate return into Thurotzer.

And now, once more they were upon their route towards home; they were again approaching Vehlhá, and this time with feelings of common interest. Rumalie indeed began to count the hills and valleys no less anxiously than his companion, as they were left behind them in the homeward track which still divided them from hearts beloved and loving. At length the misty summit of Fatra appeared in the distance; and the Vehlhá valley, in all the sweetness of its sheltered seclusion, lay extended at their feet.

The path of their descent led through a copse of weeping birch skirting the little cemetery; which, according to the continental custom uplifted its lonely walls at some distance above the

village. Barótza, as was his wont, paused beside the grated gates in pious reverence; but as he concluded his brief prayer, he started on perceiving that during his absence, a handsome sepulchral monument, a colossal cross of granite, had been erected upon the lowly grave of his parents. Slowly he approached the spot,—perused those sacred names which became thrice hallowed in their union with death and its desolate home; then kneeling beside the cross, he blessed the affectionate wife who had thus liberally appropriated a portion of her scanty means to the honour and memory of those he loved. So deeply indeed was his heart affected by this unforeseen incident, that he neither addressed his companion, nor lifted his eyes from the path until he reached the precincts of home.

Home! could it be indeed home,—his own inhabited home,—which struck his astonished gaze as he stood transfixed in the courtyard? Had a fairy hand been there,—had Rübezahl himself wandered from his mountain realm, to effect the transformation?

The breaches of time and ruin had been re-

paired,—each mouldering wall had been raised anew; and enlarged casements, stone parapets, and a wide *piâtza,* imparted an air of dignity to his ancient habitation. The devastated court was handsomely paved with granite,—a grove of young chestnuts concealed the offices,—and a long range of farm buildings extended their thatched roofs into the very depths of the shrubbery.

Niklas grew pale as death,—for a painful apprehension occurred to his mind. During his absence, the old dwelling had probably been sold, and might owe these embellishments to its new proprietor! But no!—it was his own faithful Bartz who came bounding and yelling to his feet;—it was his own aged horse which neighed from the adjoining close at the well known sound of his voice;—it was his own beloved wife and precious child, who extended their arms in welcome beneath the portal!

Lost in the confusion of amazement, forgetful in the joy of their embraces, of his guest, of himself, of the whole world, he suffered them to conduct his passive footsteps into a new and

handsome apartment, enriched with the most commodious furniture. He gazed around him with wondering admiration, but suddenly started back with horror and dismay.—Merciful Providence! on what an object are his eyes riveted,—what miracle hath brought it there?

A dark eyed, handsome youth, attired in the uniform of Schemnitz college,—Gyorgy in short, such as he was when a brother's malice banished him from Vehlhá, stood before him!

"Come hither, my son," said Urszlá in a gentle whisper, "and kneel for thy father's blessing."

Gyorgy, now advancing, bent low at his father's feet,—but Niklas recoiled on his approach.

"Forgive me, oh! my brother," faltered he, "forgive, and pity my repentance."

"I do! I do!"—exclaimed a broken voice beside him.

"Gyorgy—my brother!" murmured the heart-broken Barótza—

"Is here at thy bidding," said Rumalie flinging aside his turban, and rushing into his arms. "All is forgotten—forgiven."

But Niklas heard not—saw not—felt not; excess of agony had driven the blood from his heart. And when, having been carried into the air, he awoke to the full consciousness of happiness, he found that Urszlá and Aloïska were weeping by his side; and that his son had united his hand with that of one whom he named as his uncle, his friend, and benefactor. Yes! it was no dream,—he was once more clasped to the bosom of his long lost brother.

CHAPTER IV.

I'VE wandered where the scorching sun
Blights the fair flower it smiles upon ;
I've wandered where its warmest beam
Chills, like the moonlight's ghastly gleam ;
I've wandered where—like winged flowers,—
Gay star-bright birds flit through the bowers,
Yet ne'er awake those blossomed trees
With bursts of thrilling melodies.
Where the bright buds of velvet bloom
Tissued in nature's various loom,
Ne'er with one fragrant kiss, caressed
The breeze that haunts their loveless breast.
I've wandered where no breathing thing
'Mid the cleft granite sheltering
Gave sound or sight of life ;—where e'en
One leaf—one flower—had blest a scene
Thus to creation's purpose lost,—
The giant realm of endless frost!

I've seen the hunted elephant
Deep in the trampled jungle pant ;
I've seen the lonely vulture fly
With blood-stained beak, yet hungry eye ;—
I've seen the desart-serpent coil,—
The lion's track imprint the soil ;—

The fierce volcano fling on high
Its glaring torrents through the sky;
The boiling breakers foam and roar
O'er ambushed rocks that guard the shore;
Antres, within whose gulphs profound
Grim darkness spreads its terrors round;
And hurricanes, where bolts of death
Shed, blazing round, their sulphurous breath.

I've dwelt in vales with banks o'erhung
By purple vines,—enlaced among
The orange-branches, orbed with gold;—
I've seen the olive groves unfold
Their downy shade—reflected deep
In the calm river-waves, that sleep
So dreamingly,—so murmuringly,—
Beneath that cloudless summer sky,

I've seen the lingering daylight set
O'er mosque and arrowy minaret;—
I've marked its brighter dawning deck
Some columned temple's marble wreck;
I've felt its noontide radiance shine
Through the pagoda's sandal shrine;
Or, glimmering o'er earth's holiest dome,
Illume the fanes of sovran Rome!

But these—but all—still vainly strove
To wean me from the land I love.—
It may not brightest be, nor best,—
To *me*, it spreads a mother's breast;—
Its springs,—well from mine inmost heart,—
Its skies,—my heavenliest dreams impart,—
Its earth,—enshrines my parents' tomb,—
Its air,—amid life's darkest doom
Breathes hope into my withered soul!—
Swiftly ye loitering billows roll!

Swiftly ye lagging coursers fly!
Once more beneath my longing eye
In thy familiar charms expand—
Mine own,—my blessed fatherland!

VANE.

"AND must I in sooth recount my whole long, tedious history?" said Rumalie some few weeks afterwards, as the happy family of Barótza with young Vinzenz as a solitary addition, were seated round a glowing stove.

"Must I indeed forfeit all my mysterious dignity in your eyes, by revealing the ordinary and common-place character of my adventures? Nay then! lend me your patient hearing. So happy, so contented an auditory cannot prove very severe in its judgment; and there are some among us, unto whom the tale of my destinies may offer a valuable admonition;—one true picture of actual human existence and its vicissitudes, affords a more profitable lesson than a thousand homilies!—

"My fate, such as it hath been, owes its prevailing colour to the master-impulse of my mind, —to Hope! warm, sanguine, buoyant Hope!—The teachers of our faith aver that the Almighty

Creator hath been pleased to withhold, since the revelation of the Christian faith, that manifestation of himself which he vouchsafed unto his people in earlier ages. The light of the divine countenance is indeed denied us; —but say,—ye blind guides! what else but a Heavenly presence irradiates our hearts, when hope springs like a sun-beam through the darkness of our sorrow?—what else but the Divinity stirs within us when, with renewed strength, we cast off our heavy burthen of despair;—apply our hands, as was the purport of their creation, unto the uses of the world; and wiping the tears from our eyes, direct our eager gaze anew over the vast wilderness of life?—

"I feel—humbly and gratefully,—that my own heart hath been fashioned unto good, and my own evil fortunes redeemed, embellished, and prospered through the inspirations of a cheerful sanguine temperament, which despair hath never yet subdued. It may have sunk for a season under the pressure of distress, but only to rebound into a brighter atmosphere; and amid the obscurity of affliction's most devoted day, I have

never forgotten that its morrow must be improved by my own exertions. The surface of the heart, like the face of nature, hath many shadows; but through the darkest by which both are obscured, the brightness of the colouring beneath is still discernible. They form no blot—no blemish;—their darkness is as of the night,—it passeth away, and all is smiling as before.

"Mark how I already abuse my privilege of bestowing my tediousness in your ears! But fear not;—I have moralized my limit; and will condense my narrative, as in gratitude for your forbearance bound. I will not dwell upon the days succeeding the receipt of my father's maledictory letter; and yet, however terrible to endure, they were perhaps less cruelly painful than your own minds may now suggest; for I was in truth supported in my affliction by a sense of injury, a consciousness of unmerited chastisement; I felt that to have merely put in injudicious practice my father's oft repeated lessons, deserved not such heavy retribution. The whole affair too, wore at first the unsubstantial inconsistency of a dream; nor in its worst reality was I wholly abandoned

to my misery. My father had indeed renounced me; my brother had, as I believed, weakly resigned my cause; but I had a friend.

"Fortunately this friend was a fellow-sufferer with myself from the severity of our college discipline; he shared my public sentence, though not its private aggravation. Already he had been received with the warmest welcome by his family and father; who was Director on the lands of Prince Czakló, in Szolnok; and at Valerian's pressing invitation, I undertook a long and solitary journey in the hope of finding employment under the same liberal patronage. The way was weary,— my means narrow,—but I reached in safety the humble and hospitable home of my friend; and was appointed, shortly after my arrival, Registrar of the Prince's splendid stud. You start!—the post was an ignoble one for a gentleman and a scholar!— True;—but remember that I was a penniless scholar, a disinherited gentleman; and that I had been early taught to dread the baneful rust of idleness, which is said to eat like a canker into the strongest mind. I accepted therefore

with gratitude a situation which thus opportunely relieved the family of Valerian from my maintenance, and settled me within reach of my friend's society; for already he shared the appointment of his father, in which view he had prosecuted his studies at Schemnitz in the forest art. *

"I believe I might have vegetated in Transylvania, even unto this day, recording the birth of Jelica's bay foal, and the apportionment of forage distributed to Section C. of the Puszta, had not an incident, a very fortunate chance, introduced me to the personal notice of their master. I had been sent in control of the two chief stud-grooms, to dispose of fifty of the less valuable colts, at the fair of Besztercze. This herd of horses, to which bit, bridle, and halter were unknown,—as wild in short as any that gallop the Ukraine,—was driven by my attendants, like a flock of sheep, within the magic circle of a strong rope, and arrived without accident at the fair; where, being of a celebrated race, the whole were advan-

* *Forstwissenschaft*;—a principal branch of study at the Royal College.

tageously disposed of. On the following day, we returned, charged with three bags of ducats instead of our troublesome companions. It chanced that at nightfall we were obliged to traverse a forest of considerable extent,—the property of the Count; and the two grooms who were lords of our treasury, and bearers of the ducats, began to express their apprehensions of a hostile encounter,—natural or supernatural,—by audibly reciting the seven penitential psalms; while I, whose heart was as light as my pockets, had leisure to fix my attention upon the surrounding objects.

"During the deepening obscurity of the twilight, I had perceived, in various parts of the forest, a hovering light that appeared to issue from the earth, although no fissures were perceptible; but in the darkness of the night, these illuminated spots gave out a vivid lambent flame. I directed the attention of my companions to this species of ignis fatuus; but scarcely had the words passed my lips, when they put spurs to their horses and fled; exclaiming, '*Heilige sacrament! die poltergeister!*' the earth-imps with their mining lamps

in their hands!' and as their horses' hoofs rung in the distance, I found myself alone in the dreariness of the night. The exclamation of the grooms powerfully impressed my mind,—not with any apprehension of *poltergeister*,—but with this popular corroboration of a fact which I had frequently heard announced in the lectures of Professor Mödling;—that every considerable body of mineral substance gives out a gaseous emanation,* in many instances lambent or inflammable. Heaven knows how little my mineralogical studies had profited my mind; but so simple and curious a circumstance had found a place in my memory; and upon my return to Czakló, unmolested by earth or other imps, I ceased not to consider the subject; till at length, fully persuaded that mines of some extent and value still lay undetected in the recesses of the forest, I made personal application to the Prince

* The difficulty of breathing experienced in certain spots, both by mules and travellers, in crossing the Cordilleras, is ascribed by the guides to the same cause; (*Vide* Lieutenant Brand's Narrative). And one of the most celebrated gold mines in Hungary, that of Nagyag, was discovered in the manner described by Rumalie.

for permission to sink a shaft in one of the illuminated spots. For many weeks, pick-axe and lever were exerted in vain; — in vain I watched the windlass, and myself unloaded the succeeding buckets: the products of my speculation continued most unpromising.

"An innovation is always unpopular; and both the Director and the miners employed by his Highness on the occasion, were loud in their predictions of failure, and sneers at my presumption. Judge, therefore, of my triumph—judge of the Prince's delight, when at length a rich auriferous ore made its appearance; and when, in the course of a few hours, a considerable heap of *tellurets* of gold was laid at our feet. Other shafts soon enabled us to explore the various spots marked out by the hydrogenous exhalations; and in every instance the vein soon presented itself. For many weeks nothing but rejoicing and amazement prevailed throughout the estate.

"Your gratulatory looks inform me that you consider my fortune already assured; and if the sincerity of his Highness's gratitude could have enriched me, your judgment had not been pre-

mature. But just at the height of my popularity and good report, my evil genius willed that the old Director of the Czakló mines should fall a victim to a six months' ague; or, according to a more prevailing opinion, to vexation at his own obstinacy, and impatience of my success. The Prince hastened to offer me his appointment, which was one of two thousand annual florins, to be doubled while filled by myself. He was equally eager to testify his sense of my zeal in his service, and to adopt a convenient mode of repayment; for like most of our magnats, his riches consisted in woods and waters, mines and herding plains,—he had not ten ducats at command! But notwithstanding my desire to accept a requital which might at once advantage my patron, and extend my sphere of activity in his service, I felt that to obey his commands was in this instance, wholly out of my power.

"For many years, the post in question had formed an object of hope and just expectation to Valerian's father; an old and faithful servant to his Highness, far better skilled to protect his interests than myself, whose success was solely

attributable to an act of memory. What was to be done? I dared not incense my noble patron by refusal; I could not bring myself to deprive the family of my friend,—the family which had sheltered me in my destitution,—of the just reward of patient industry! I passed a restless night, and had taken, ere morning, a desperate resolve. I mounted a noble steed which had been my first token of the Prince's munificence,—left a letter of explanation to all parties,—and departed to push my fortunes elsewhere.

"Gyorgy!—Aloïska!—your admiration is misplaced. Kiss not my hands so fervently; for selfish and human motives mingled their influence in my decision. My mining vocation had been, even at Schemnitz, a compulsory one; I abhor the gloomy caverns of the earth, while the free air can be breathed above them. Besides, my spirit is of the most restless cast; and at that season of my life, a permanent situation in an obscure Transylvanian forest had been insupportable. I longed to satiate my ardent curiosity by wilder wanderings; and crossing into the

Bukowine, I assumed the garb of an unpretending adventurer: I became a balsam-seller!

"It was now for the first time that I felt the loneliness of my position in the world; for suspicions that I had been unfairly dealt with, began to embitter even my recollections of home. The observations of Valerian and of his family had first suggested to my mind the possibility of —— a brother's treachery!—Dark thought! dread thought!—I cast it from my bosom like an enemy, and tried to banish its corroding influence; but in vain! I could still be cheerful and unsuspecting amid the green pastures, or during my daylight labours; but at night, when I became helpless and feeble through mental exertion and bodily fatigue, then—like a vampire bat the horrible idea of my brother's hatred crept in to fasten itself upon its feeble victim; renewing with bloody talons, the agony of my heart. Think not however that I yielded myself an easy prey to gloomy retrospections, or still darker forebodings; I summoned all the energies of my mind; I resolved to labour,—to conquer fate,—and I have done so!

"'But a balsam-seller,' you will say, 'a clerk to grooms!—are these your illustrious paths to fortune?' Already Aloïska gives up her hope of the Emir's daughter whom her active imagination had conjured up to redeem me from slavery, and endow me with a world of riches! Already Gyorgy despairs of finding me the leader of a Tâtar troop, with all its privilege of plunder! Dear children! be patient and wonders will come!

"Very early in my practice, I acquired considerable reputation in my new trade; in truth my chemical studies had considerably enlarged my provincial experience, and raised my skill far above that of our ordinary Thurotzian balsam-venders. During a summer's ramble through Moldavia, even unto Odessa, my stock of worldly wealth was more than doubled; and in a commercial city, and in one so rich in oriental produce, I was not only enabled to swell my stores of medicinable gums, but to disperse them among numerous customers. But I did more; I formed an agreeable and profitable acquaintance.

Hänsel was a young man nearly of my own

age, and still more nearly of my own adventurous character. By birth a Wirtemberger, his family had formed part of that singular band of emigrants which affected to believe its colonization in Grusia foretold in the book of Revelations.

"'A better explanation of their renouncement of their native land,' said Hänsel when he related their history, 'may be read in its wretchedness, its exhaustion by a rapacious government, and in the facility afforded by that noble pathway of waters,—the Danube,—to those who would traverse Europe, and seek the luxuries of an Eastern climate. Could you but see our filthy villages,—dark with physical and moral obscurity,—could you witness our thriftless labour, our miserable destitution, you would know why we seek the musky vineyards of Georgia,—where our corn and wine and oil have increased.' Hänsel had been despatched by the little colony as an envoy to their native country; and had been charged to establish a line of communication through Odessa. He was now on the point of crossing the Bosphorus on his return, and asked me to accompany him to his Asiatic

home.—What had such a vagrant to object? In eight days we landed at Tchumat, and were on our road toward Tiflis.

"To pass from one great kingdom to another forms an epoch in most men's lives. A new language,—climate,—government,—are for a time objects of wonderment and interest;—but the change between two of the earth's mighty quarters, is indeed an exciting transition. I shall never forget the thrill of my whole frame, when I set foot in Asia;—a region, how glorious in its interests! how lovely in its inheritance from Heaven! The land of the date—the fig—and the green olive;—the land of miracles; the land where God spake audibly unto his people;—where the Lamb of promise was sacrificed for mankind, and whence the glory of his name hath departed, or shrunk into a vain echo!—all lay open to my wanderings,

"My first experience of an Oriental city was in Tiflis; and none perhaps could be better calculated to dispel the illusions my visionary mind had gathered from poetical descriptions of Bagdad, or historical records of Babylon. I

beheld a collection of narrow lanes formed of mud hovels, to which the sallow inhabitants waded through a sea of less consistent mud. The rank odours issuing from these cabins,—the howl of the jackals at sunset among the cemeteries of the city,—the scorpions basking on the filthy walls,—all struck me with disgust; and I was right glad to escape from a spot so uninviting, and to accompany my friend Hänsel into the beautiful province of Racheticon, where the little German settlement restored me to the cleanliness and homeliness of Europe. Imagine to yourself the simple dwellings of Wirtemberg with their wooden balconies and overhanging roofs,—their labouring inhabitants in three-cornered hats, and their female peasantry costumed in the Swiss fashion,—imagine them sheltered by the lofty palm,—dreading the incursions of tigers, and the swarming of the tarantulas!

"Delighted to welcome a European to their remote habitation, Hänsel's worthy relations received me with *saüs und braus;* mingled *sauerkraut* with their *pillau,* to do me honour; and in the course of a few days I found myself sharing

the labours of the farm. The lands chiefly allotted to their use by the Russian government, which warmly protects the little colony, consist in vineyards fallen to decay, that have been redeemed by their industry. Now an Hungarian claims to have been born a vintager; for although our vines are said to have been transplanted from Syria by the Emperor Probus, still it is the Magyarian mode of cultivation which produces the most precious of wines from our presses. Hänsel was eager to gather from my instructions the art of separating the *trockenbeeren*, or dried grapes, which form the celebrated *ausbruch* essence of Tokäy; and my abode in Georgia was sufficiently long to witness the profit arising from my lessons.

"But dearly as I love the solitary haunts of the hills, the lonely surface of the lake, or the seclusion of the enshelved valley, I confess that I cannot long endure to inhabit a village; where the evil passions of the city are equally to be found, and aggravated by meanness and mediocrity of mind. I was weary of my Wirtembergers and their petty jealousies; and having procured

strong letters of recommendation from the pastor of the Settlement to the superior of an Armenian convent at Erivan, I took an affectionate leave of my kind hosts, and departed to shape my wandering course through Persia, as one of a numerous caravan.

"It was formed of a curious patchwork of the rags and tatters of human life, mixed with a few fragments of brocade. Dives rode beside Lazarus in the train; — several substantial Armenian merchants, — a thriving Jew from Erivan, and a son of the Khan of Udgany rode in our company. I had purchased a camel at Tiflis, and assumed something of an oriental costume, in order to disguise from others, if not from myself, my strangeness in the land; and as our road lay through scenery of the most majestic character, dark with rocks, and animated by brawling rivers, while the mighty Caucasus uplifted its snowy summits in the distance, I was less sensible to the labours of the journey than my companions; to all of whom its interesting features were familiar. An incident however soon occurred which put every dream of the sublime and beautiful to flight.

"I was usually one of the loiterers of the train; and as I entered the dreary pass leading from Bekamti to Gumri, the ominous discharge of a *tophaike* struck me with consternation. I hastily looked to the priming of my pistols, and had scarcely replaced them in my belt when, from the turn of a projecting rock, I perceived the caravan halting in disorder, and surrounded by a troop of Lesghees, some of whom were in active affray with its insufficient escort. Fortunately the report of our moderate attractions had rescued us from becoming a prey to one of the superior mountain troops; we had been resigned to the sparrow-hawks of the profession.

"I did not however, at the moment of attack, so proudly disdain their condition. I had nothing to defend but a wallet of simples, a few caskets of precious drugs, and some score of gold pieces; but being well armed, I made as valiant an outbreak, as if the field of Mohacs were again to be won or lost. Probably the insignificance of my profession formed as good a buckler as my strength of arm. 'Tis but a poor balsam-seller,' said a robber who had attacked me. 'Live!

wretch, live! to be a slayer of men with weapons less noble than ours.'

"This taunt, upon my calling, redoubled my ire against the base maligner of art; and as he galloped off in search of higher prey, I flew to the assistance of the Jew whom I beheld on the opposite bank, suffering under the persecutions of three of the Lesghees. They had tied his gaberdine above his head, and were slashing his under garments in all directions in search of his hidden treasures. I could observe that the hollow groans of the poor old man were redoubled, as each succeeding purse chinked upon the ground in its fall. But my inclination to smile at this wringing forth of his earthly substance, and at his bewailment, ceased when I obtained a full view of his person; every slash had drawn blood through his light clothing, and bodily torment had its full share in his agonized clamour.

"I rushed forwards to his aid,—shot the foremost of his riflers dead on the spot,—and with my second pistol disabled another; but in engaging with the third, although finally victorious, I received a severe cut in the arm. Our party,

as I trust your presentiments assure you, remained masters of the field; for my first persuasion that our Cossack escort was in league with the heroes of the *chappow* or foray, was proved unfounded by their efficient assistance in time of need. Their counsels, as well as my own apprehensions, now prompted us to overlook our wounds and fatigues, and to push onwards to the frontier, where we should be secure from the further molestation of the Kurds; for the iron rule of Hossein, the Serdar of Erivan, secures the province from all rapine but his own. My camel, which had been hamstrung, I was therefore forced to abandon; but Meshech, the grateful Jew, the pain of whose wounds I had hastily allayed by a healing balsam, insisted on placing me upon his own; while he contented himself with his baggage mule, whose load had been somewhat eased by the spoilers. We left the human carrion of several of these lawless wretches unto the eagles of the Caucasus; and like the wicked, *fled*, though no man pursued.

"It was evening before I was enabled to wash the blood from my stiffened wound, and to admi-

nister that simple chirurgeonship to myself, which Meshech had so gladly received at my hands; for believing that the avengers of blood were behind us, we tarried not till we had gained the Persian territory. A few more tedious days, and the cleft summit of Ararat rose above our heads, with its eternal snow shining beneath the smile of Heaven. We passed the celebrated monastery of Eitch-mai-Adzen,* and entered the city of Erivan. In the course of those days the venerable Meshech had bestowed more sympathy upon the wound I had received in his defence, and had displayed a warmer interest in my favour than I had believed could be elicited from one of his tribe by any thing less than the fraction of a piastre; he even pressed me to become his guest in the city during my stay!

"'Tarry with me, my son!' said the old man, 'and lo! thou shalt behold the fatness of our land. Meshech hath the authority of much age among his people; and shall not thy traffic with the sons of men prosper under his fosterage? Therefore tarry with me, and thy soul shall be glad.'

* Founded by St. Gregory in honour of a divine vision, A. D. 304. The monastery, which is of an immense extent, is the residence of the Armenian patriarch.

"But the very sight of his squalid abode, with the storks' nests clustering round its shapeless roof, determined me to seek my intended quarters in an Armenian convent of the city. While I stood muttering my excuses in the porch of the Jew's mean habitation, a veiled figure eagerly advancing, knelt low at the feet of Meshech, and pressed his garment to her lips. 'Miriam! my child,' said he,— 'be the blessing of the Eternal on thy head, and about thy path! Arise, oh! my daughter,— behold this youth, and do him honour; for verily thy father's days had been cut off in untimeousness by the men of Belial, who gird on their swords for evil, had not his better arm prevailed in the day of bloodshed.'

"The kneeling maiden started and trembled at the thought of her father's danger; but drawing aside the drapery from her face, she disclosed a countenance rich in the lofty beauties of her tribe;—the high forehead, expressive eyebrow, and raven hair. Her large dark eyes were dim with tears, as she raised them to look upon one who had preserved a parent to her affection; she pressed her quivering lips to my tunic, and

would have brought water to bathe my feet, believing that I was about to sojourn as a guest in her father's dwelling. She murmured not when I persisted in immediate departure, but methought she looked after me with regret.

"For my own part, I must confess that in the dreary halls of the Armenian convent, where, in honour of my recommendations and thriving trade, I was warmly welcomed, the image of the Jewish maiden haunted my dreams more frequently than beseemed so holy a roof. During our journey, Meshech, with doating loquacity, had delighted to dwell upon instances of her tender mercy, her forgetfulness of self, her filial devotion. He had never spoken of her loveliness, but that mine own eyes had recognized; and the impression of her graceful gentleness was sweetened by those more precious memories of her excellence. Meanwhile, my calling throve with me. Meshech's good word established my credit at the Bazaar; and partly through the superior drugs attainable in the city,—partly through the superstitious credulity of its inhabitants, my riches and reputation soon waxed great in Erivan.

"In the pauses of my industry, I was frequently feasted in the grateful Jew's unpromising habitation; and great indeed was my surprise on observing how little its interior arrangements, and the character of the entertainment, accorded with the affected poverty of my host. Our repast was usually spread in a chamber, of which the spacious window was formed of small panes of gorgeously stained glass; and overlooked a garden; bright with still more gorgeous flowers, which sloped towards the river Zengui. The carpets which covered the marble floor were of the most costly tissue; and between small niches, freshly filled with aromatic plants, a single painting, of no mean excellence, ornamented the wall; it represented the patriarch Lot, entertaining the Angel. Sometimes a gray-bearded Rabbi or two,—solemn and stiffnecked, and controversial as a Pharisee of the olden time,—sat beside a board on which vessels of gold, and vessels of silver, and drinking cups of agate and onyx, displayed their splendours. And Meshech would say unto his daughter, 'Even this day shalt thou partake of our feast; for lo! the elders of thy people, and

the youth who fought a go[illegible] fight for thy father, may look without reproach upon thine uncovered face.' And as we sat at meat, I have glanced from the table unto the picture, and from the picture unto our table; grieving the while that the painter's eyes had never rested on the brighter angel by our side!

"How lovely she was!—lovely as her life of charity and tenderness! How fair she looked with her nimble fingers sewing a fretwork of pearl upon a brocaded cushion for her father's prayers;—her dark hair falling importunately over her work, which at times she would throw back with her hand, and uplift her radiant face to listen unto the lessons of wisdom, unfolded in discourse by the sages of her tribe! How fondly too did Meshech doat upon this tender child of his old age! To adorn her beauty,—to gratify her liberal benevolence,—he forgot his habitual parsimony. He gave her wealth,—and through wealth, influence among the daughters of her people; but he gave her *more*;—even the fullness of every thought and every feeling which he spared from Heaven. Yes! of all the passions

of our nature, that which hallows the tie between a father and his child hath alone withstood the corruptions of the world! Although it sprang up within the human heart amid the paths of earth, and in the earliest days of mortal sin, yet doth it remain as it hath ever been, a bond of holiest love,—exquisite to enjoy, and sacred to behold!

"I know not how long I had been, or might have been detained in Erivan, when one morning in the midst of a rebuke with which I was favoured by the Superior of the convent, touching my repeated visits to the defiled dwelling of a filthy Jew, I felt a consciousness of sudden sickness oppress my respiration. I looked towards the sky,—it seemed blotted with darkened spots;—towards the earth,—it appeared to reel beneath my feet. Smitten with apprehension, I crawled unto the cell of one of the brethren, renowned for his leechcraft; but so sooner had he gazed upon my ghastly face, and listened to my tale of tumid joints, than he flung his robe over his head, and fled away. '*He is plague-stricken!*' reached my ear, as the monk attained his trembling companions.

"Convinced of the truth of his assertion, I lay me down upon the pavement of the cell, with the horrid thought of death heavy upon my soul; for my art instructed me that no remedy might avail against the destroying angel of the East. 'I will lie down, and die!' I murmured through my clenched teeth, 'an alien,—an outcast,—without a country, without a home, where can I better resign my vexed spirit than in this holy abode? Heaven in its mercy provides me a refuge in the grave,—a Christian grave, in a land of idolaters!'

"I had not remained long in this tranquil frame of mind, when the door of the cell grated upon its hinges, and a young Armenian orphan, a novice of the convent, stood before me, bearing a brasier of aloes interposed between his lips and my polluted person. He was a messenger from the Superior.

"'Arise, and depart hence,' said the mandate of which he was the bearer; 'nor defile with pestilence the temple of thy God; for lo! its holy sanctuary must not be barred of access unto those Christian feet which seek therein the bread

of life! Go! stranger, in peace and quietness; and the Heaven in which we put our trust, will provide shelter for the infected wanderer of its flock.'

"My first impulse was to resist this seemingly inhospitable decree; but on striving to collect my infirm senses, I could not but acknowledge its justice. 'The words of the Padre are words of truth!' was my amended reply. 'It were an evil thing to infect the congregation of my Christian brethren.'

"I had still strength sufficient to wrestle with the disease; I rose tottering upon my feet, and groping my way from the convent, resolved to seek the Lazaret erected upon the opposite bank of the Zengui; directing my course so as to traverse the by-ways of the crowded city, and to take a last view of the sole dwelling in which my death would excite even a passing sensation. It might be that a consciousness like this heightened the raging of my distemper; or, perhaps it was simply the fierceness of the noonday sun by which I was overcome;—I fell, motionless and half senseless by the way. I was able however

to perceive the horror excited by my appearance; all men fled when they had looked upon my livid face; and as I lay there in my loneliness to await the chilling approach of death, I fixed my dim eyes upon those twin summits of Ararat which had formed the first harbour of a storm-driven vessel,—upon that sky above them, whereon the first covenant of mercy between God and his creatures, was sealed by a visible and immortal token;—I looked, and was comforted.

"At times I was distracted from such contemplations by grievous bodily torments; at others, a sort of visionary ecstasy took possession of my bewildered senses; already my spirit seemed disembodied, and flitting through a dark abyss; and as it appeared to fall lower and lower into a fathomless gulf, methought the Cross, like a mighty anchor, was proffered for my support,—and lo! as I grasped it to my bosom, my wandering soul regained its firmness!

"At length, other and mere mortal images were mingled with those of my delirium. Earthly figures passed before my eyes,—a stifled shriek I heard,—a woman's lamentation,—a confusion

seemed to arise, a despatch of messengers; and shortly afterwards I plainly distinguished the voice of Meshech. 'What dost thou here, Miriam?'—said the old man, reproachfully. 'Art thou not the sole child of thy father's house, and shall thy days be perilled for a stranger?'

"'My father!' replied the subdued voice of the Jewish maiden, 'when this Christian youth redeemed thy life with a strong arm of defence, didst thou not swear by the God of Israel that so thou wouldst do unto him, and more also? Oh! my father! turn not thy face from him in the path;—for so shall the vengeance of the Lord fall upon thy broken vow!'

"A few minutes afterwards, I was lifted upon a mule; and in the intervals of my delirium, I was conscious of being stretched upon a couch in Meshech's habitation. Day and night had become alike to me;—it was all a horrible confusion of pain and fear. Yet even amid the torments I endured, a mysterious soothing would suspend their terrors; a heavenly influence would prevail over the demon of the plague. It was the voice of Miriam!—her touch—her tending—

her sisterly expostulations! As she bent over my bed of agony, warm tears would mingle with the death-dews upon my brow. 'Be not afraid,' she whispered with dove-like softness. 'My father's prayers,—whose life was a gift of thine,—and the prayers of our people, intercede in thy behalf, that the God whom thou servest may walk by thy side in the dark valley. Beyond,—no fear,—no pain abideth;—therefore be of good cheer, oh! my brother!'

"The valley of my wandering was indeed dark; for of the further progress of my disorder I know nothing. All was veiled in the blackness of night! At length, after a vague interval, I awoke to a renewed sense of existence;—or was I dreaming still? for an unearthly wailing, as of many voices, was borne fitfully unto mine ears. I longed to inquire its origin; but the icy hand was not yet withdrawn, nor my tongue unloosed; again I relapsed into insensibility.

"But when next my eyes re-opened to the light, I was enabled to gaze around me through the shadows of my chamber; and I beheld Meshech with sackcloth upon his shoulders,

sitting in lowliness upon the ground. Ashes were scattered upon his gray hairs, and despair had set its seal upon his altered face. A thrill of horror passed through my enfeebled frame.

" '*Father!*' I faltered.—But starting at the name, he pressed his hands unto his ears, as if to shut out a sound that wounded them.

" 'Speak — speak,' said I again, 'my friend, — my preserver, — speak! Where — where is Miriam?'

" '*At rest!*' replied the old man in a hollow voice; — and he hid his face in his garment, and wept.

CHAPTER IV.

> I swept that flower from Judah's stem.
>
> Byron.

"Yes! Miriam was dead,—had died for my sake!" resumed Rumalic, after a pause of deep emotion. "Cheered by the knowledge that her father in his youthful days had passed in safety through the disorder, she had persisted in her attendance upon my deserted couch,—had sickened and perished ere the knowledge of her illness had spread alarm among the hearts that loved her. The poor had lost their friend,—the sad and the sick their comforter;—Meshech, the prop of his old age,—and myself,—but I will not speak of the sorrows of her destroyer during his long and tedious return to the common paths

of existence, — to an existence eternally embittered by her loss! I joined my tears unto those of the bereaved father; who far from harbouring resentment against me as the unintentional author of his calamity, derived his only consolation from this participation of affliction.

" 'Oh! do not leave me, my son!' said he at length, when returning strength released me from my couch, 'do not leave me to my desolation; while thou namest me thy father I am not wholly childless! Do not abandon my old age!'

" Could I refuse him,—could I, thus urged, desert his gloomy dwelling? No! I resolved to remain the guest of Meshech till his mind had grown inured to its wretchedness,—the wretchedness I had brought upon his prosperity. I spoke no more of departure; and soon, very soon after I had formed my determination, symptoms of mental and physical decay became painfully evident in the poor old man. He wasted away, gradually but rapidly; — became feeble, helpless, decrepid ;— the mainspring of his existence was snapt in twain. I hastened to gather about him the elders of his people, that they might minister

to the sufferings of an afflicted brother; and they did so. I own I was even deeply touched by the reverent sympathy testified towards him; but they had all known Miriam,—could they do less than mourn with those who mourned her? Nay! so true, so tender was the esteem in which this pearl of all her tribe had been held in Erivan, that her influence had overcome its customs and its laws. The bodies of those who die of the plague, however high their rank, or mighty their possessions, are dragged with tongs through the city unto the common grave, by condemned criminals clad in a vesture of oil-skin. But Miriam's bier had been surrounded by many mourners, nor surrendered unhonoured unto the tomb. As many flowers had been strewn upon her virgin corse, as though contagion lurked not there; and she was borne in triumph to her grave, by a multitude whose tears were the best records of her brief existence!

"How often have I sat beneath the awning of Meshech's habitation, listening to his recital of her dying hours,—and to the words of consolation breathed into his ears by the priests of his

faith! But when I could no longer disguise from myself how greatly his strength failed him between morrow and morrow, I could not endure to see him thus leaning upon a broken reed,—dying in the profession of a reprobated creed, under the horrible curse invited by his forefathers;—and I attempted to introduce into our discourse the doctrines, if not the divine mission of the Redeemer.

"'My son!' replied the enfeebled Meshech, no whit irritated by my attempt, 'thou meanest me well,—kindly; but tempt me no more from the ancient faith of my fathers,—from the faith of my innocent child; for what promise can that Heaven unfold to mine eyes, which rejects my Miriam from its eternal precincts?—Nor speak to me of doctrines, nor of vain forms. Death hath been busy of late within mine household; and I have looked upon his fearful aspect, face to face. I saw my Miriam die!-- I saw the last breath quiver upon her young lips;—and what, thinkest thou, oh! Rumalie,—upheld my soul in the trial? Not the remembrance of burnt offering, nor oblation,—not the fasts,—not the

festivals my child had kept holy! Oh! no—no—no! It was the tears she had wiped from the faces of the poor,—it was the humility of her devotion towards her old father,—it was the saintly purity of her spirit which taught me to lay her head with calmness in the grave!'

"'Nevertheless,' said I, when the images he had conjured up, vanished back into the memory of my soul, 'nevertheless, it is written that through faith alone we shall see God.'

"'Said I not that the creed of my fathers was immutable in my eyes?' resumed the old man. 'I know that I am a worm in the sight of the Most High;—but if it be his will to call me unto himself, the unbelief in which I was born and bred, will not be my condemnation.'

"I was struck by the old man's Christian-like humility of mind. I felt myself too little capable of giving an account of the faith that was in me, to blame the submission with which he had received, unexamined, the doctrines professed by his parents. 'Forgive me,' said I, 'even this one more question. Hast thou lived according to the strict interpretation of the law of Moses?

Hast thou followed, in all things, the commandments of the God of Israel?'

"'In the sight of Jehovah,' replied Meshech, devoutly, 'the self-vaunting of a sinful mortal is as the vain crackling of thorns; yet according unto the light vouchsafed me, I have not erred wilfully from the path.'

"I have since blamed myself that I called not for the aid of the Armenian teachers, in my desire of Meshech's conversion. Perhaps it was my youth and incapacity which determined me to relinquish my attempt; for I never again sought to disturb the mental resignation of the poor old Jew. He was to me but as Miriam's father; and I held it sacrilege to sever their immortal interests. I sometimes fear that it was this forbearance on my part, which begat the reciprocal forbearance of his tribe. In his last hours he summoned the elders to his side, and having made a deed of gift unto their institutions of one half of his great wealth, he solemnly bequeathed the remainder unto myself. If they were displeased by this prodigal act, they murmured not, or then, or since. They looked upon me as

Meshech's adopted son, and sought not to disturb mine inheritance.

"When he was dying he demanded, as an act of great indulgence at their hands, that the dirge which had graced the obsequies of his child might be repeated in his parting hour. And lo! the white-robed children of the synagogue stood by his bedside; and once more I listened to that solemn strain which had been as Miriam's passing-bell in my ears!

HEBREW DIRGE.

I.

Our brightest star is set!
  Clouds overcame its shining,
  Yet breathe we no repining,
'T will rise and sparkle yet!

II.

Our gentlest dove hath fled!
  Whose murmuring music stealing
  Soothed every angry feeling
Our vain hearts nourished.

III.

Our fairest pearl is lost!
  Our pearl, whose spotless whiteness
  Dazzled those eyes with brightness
Which loved its beauty most.

IV.

Our sweetest rose is gone!
  Our thornless rose, whose blooming
  Withered beneath the dooming
Of the Eternal One!

V.

Our blessed child is dead!—
  Fading as summer faileth
  When Autumn's storm prevaileth
O'er some lone lily's bed!

VI.

She's gone unto her rest!
  Oh! tranquil are the slumbers
  A soul so gentle numbers
Ere joined unto the blest!

VII.

And lo! we do not weep,—
Her mortal cares are over,
No griefs, no terrors move her
In that soft summer sleep!

VIII.

We do not dare to mourn!
Thy mercy, Lord! confessing,
We render back a blessing
Thou claimest in thy turn!

IX.

Accept the sacrifice
Oh! mighty God! To soften
Thy wrath enkindled often,
Let this one lamb suffice!

"And Meshech was gathered unto his fathers, —and I,—a Christian and a stranger,—was the sole lingerer over the grave which united him to her whom we had lost. But it was even myself who had laid them there; like a minister of

divine vengeance, I had smitten them unto the dust!

"The city of Erivan had become as the valley of death unto my heart; and as I was retarded by no hindrance in the distribution of Meshech's heritage, I quickly prepared for my departure; leaving my horribly acquired wealth in the hands of several commercial brethren of the tribe. From that period, my relations with the scattered remnant of Israel have never ceased; and let me hasten to do them that justice which the world denies. In all our numerous negociations in the East, and in my native land, I have never met with evil-dealing at their hands: watchful to a proverb over their own interests, I have never found their rapaciousness betray them into fraud or unfairness of any kind. More than once I have incurred the rebukes of my spiritual pastors, by my communion with their tribe. But was it for me, who have proved so largely their generous mercy, to cast a stone at them?—was it for me, a stranger youth and an ignorant, to attempt the overthrow of an ancient faith, which the Omniscient hath permitted to outlast the wreck of empires?—

"I had intended," observed Rumalie, "to lay before your eyes the uninterrupted path of my wanderings;* but the painful feelings which have arisen in my heart from this recurrence to my youthful sorrows, and the tears which I have already seen you yield to their memory, forewarn me not to trouble the joy of the passing time by such bitter reminiscences. Trust me that the afflictions I have described are trifling and poor in comparison with the calamity which, in after life, blighted my bosom; and which, ten years after my adventures in Erivan, drove me back to Europe, a heart-stricken and miserable man. Bereft of every thing, save the useless wealth which nothing that I loved survived to share, I resolved to revisit Hungary, in order to learn whether the old man my father were yet alive.

"Once more I traversed the Bosphorus, and wearing the Turkish costume in furtherance of the character which best suited my wanderings, I reached Semlin; where, partly from habit, and

* Rumalie's Arabian adventures are suppressed, as engrossing too much space in a work that professes to be descriptive of Hungary.

partly to divert my thoughts from past misfortunes, I continued the traffic in which you have seen me engaged with some of the leading mercantile houses of Hungary. It was in the course of one of these negociations, that I became interested in the destinies of a young spendthrift, an officer of one of the Milanese regiments quartered in the garrison. Long before he had announced himself to me as Johan Barótza, his singular resemblance to our family had convinced me that kindred blood flowed in our veins.

"My first object was to satisfy his pecuniary wants,—my second to acquaint myself with the changes which twenty years had wrought in Thurotzer; and you may imagine with what a throbbing heart I prepared myself to listen to his replies. His first announcement,—that of my father's recent death, I had naturally been prepared to expect; but to find that my young kinsman was indebted for his existence to the union of my brother with—*with Urszlá,* was a great and very unlooked-for blow. All that followed indeed was painful to my feelings. The

defects of my nephew's character are unfortunately too familiar to my hearers to require any disguise on my part; I do not hesitate therefore to record the falsehoods and calumnies which I heard and credited from his lips, and which were but intended to swell his own consequence in the eyes of a stranger. His father, he described as one of the richest and most prosperous nobles of his native country; proud, unfeeling, covetous, and stinting the common wants of his children in order to swell the pomp of his own magnificence! Thus satisfied with the temporal well-doing of my brother, I proceeded with great caution to inquire after a kinsman; one whom I affected to have known at Schemnitz in my early youth.

"'Hush! hush! my worthy friend Rumalie!' replied the insolent boy. 'An thou lovest me, not a word of my felon-uncle; who, I doubt not, has by this time found his way to the galleys.'

"Was this then the view which my brother had given of my character? Were these the feelings he had instilled into his children on my behalf? Was this my encouragement to visit

Thurotzer, where my presence would be loathsome, and my wealth superfluous? I took a hasty leave of Semlin and of the braggart representative of my family honours, and once more commenced my wanderings. I visited, I verily believe, every nook and corner of my native country, save that to which I was indebted for my birth. The early prejudices of my childhood began to revive, and Hungary resumed in my estimation, that pinnacle of superiority which I had formerly conceded to its claims. Since the extinction of my lingering hope to find a father or a brother among my countrymen, I began to look upon every Hungarian as claiming some share in my regard; and thus my good will and good offices procured me theirs in return; and Rumalie the Turkish pedlar became the favoured guest of many a fireside, and the darling of many a heart, where Gyorgy Barótza would have knocked in vain. A vague hope of attaching myself to my native country by the renewal of some earlier tie, tended also to render still palatable the vagrant existence to which I had condemned myself. Altogether the contrast between the slavish and indolent habits,

the filth and superstition of the Oriental countries wherein I had abided so long, and the frank independence and daring courage of the Magyari, struck me with delight and pride. We have been called a nation of warriors,—of horsemen;—such at least were our progenitors; and even the heavy yoke of Austria has not entirely subdued the spirit which forms our best—our sole inheritance.

"You look impatient,—you would learn where, and in what manner, my encounter with yonder dear boy restored my affections to yourselves?—Fear not; my story is drawing towards its happy conclusion.

"It was at the close of the last autumn, that a negociation I had undertaken between my correspondents at Debreczin and a Walachian house, induced me to visit Bûkorest to inspect a consignment of *ruja* root, with which the Hungarian tanners intended to supersede the use of sumach. Having satisfactorily concluded my business, and on my return traversed the vast plains which separate Walachia from the Transylvanian frontier, I resolved to bend my homeward course through Szolnok, in order to inquire after the

fortunes, or perhaps the *survivors* of my boyish friend Valerian; and as I once more turned my back upon the Crescent and the Horse-tail, my heart sunk within me on setting foot upon my native earth, and feeling how poor were my claims, how insignificant my ties to the country of my fathers.

"I had passed the boundary of the Ottoman empire, and had already entered that magnificent defile,—the pass of the Red Tower; when giving up my horse to my Walachian guide, that he might pull its ears and rub its eyes according to their national mode of refreshment, I resolved to ascend the mountain on foot. Wearied by the sameness of the level plains I had recently traversed, I gazed with renewed delight upon the stupendous crags by which I was surrounded, from whose summits the frail flowers of the white saxifrage were profusely suspended by aërial tendrils. The road, which follows the ledges of the rocks, is in many places supported by wooden bridges uniting the awful fissures of the granite, and appearing to tremble in the air.

"I looked around me on the barren loneliness

of the spot, and shuddered! 'And this,' said I, 'is the image of my gloomy destiny! Solitude and darkness are its prevailing characters; the screaming vulture haunts its recesses, and the milder woodland birds fly from its desolation. And if a few transitory flowers deign to embellish its gloomy surface, they waver tremblingly, and hesitate to fix themselves irrevocably in a soil so arid.' Suddenly a moving object in the path, suspended my contemplations. A boy, a joyous animated youth, was bounding along the ledges of the pass, and singing forth the loud carol of a happy heart;—it was a song of my native province. He approached;—and I was able to distinguish his costume and his countenance;—his dress was that of a balsam-seller of Thurotzer,—his features were—*my own!* He was a living restoration of my boyhood!

"I was paralysed;—nay! let me confess all my weakness, I even fancied myself under the delusions of the renowned genii of the region, when, in answer to my greeting and repeated inquiries, the figure replied, 'My name?—Gyorgy Barótza, at your service.'

"Your father—your mother"—

"'My poor father's name is Niklas;—and Urszlá is my mother; though I can scarcely reconcile it to myself to shame them as being the parents of a miserable balsam-seller.'

"You may imagine the affecting recognition that ensued,—you may easily conjecture the joy, not unmixed with bitterness, by which my heart was oppressed. I took my nephew to my bosom;—and from that day I have considered him as the son of my adoption. Together we journeyed unto Czáklo, where I was welcomed with the warmest regard. After a lapse of twenty years, the Prince rejoiced to prove the continuance of his gratitude for my former services, by placing Gyorgy, at my request, in the college of Schemnitz, of which his Highness is president. The only circumstance that occurred to damp my satisfaction was the reply I now received from the authorities of Szent Marton, unto whom I had applied for assistance in the redemption,—according to the law of the realm,—of our family estates. 'Johan Barótza,' they wrote, 'had died at Naples; and my brother had expatriated himself.'

"I succeeded, however, my dear Niklas, in tracing you to Pesth,—to Belgrade;—and followed you, as in the course of my ordinary traffic; but I resolved to acquaint myself with the nature of your sentiments towards a long-lost, and long-injured brother, before I declared myself. I had nearly however broken through my determination, when I witnessed, at Belgrade, your agony of despair the night of the conflagration; and I was waiting an occasion to present myself to your assistance, when your departure under the shadow of night, baffled my researches, and betrayed you into the tyrannical thraldom of the Fiscal of Nagy-Börö. Accident, indeed, alone discovered to me the snares into which you had innocently fallen!

"And now, all is told! We have cast our sorrows behind us; and our future is bright with hope and happiness. May the blessing of Heaven render them permanent."

Thus ended the narrative of Rumalie;—every word of which rendered him still more dear, still more interesting to the hearts of his auditors. The little family continued to dwell

together in happy household union, until Aloïska, following the fortunes of a husband she adored, departed for Vienna.

"My Uncle!" whispered she to Rumalie, at parting. "An unhappy presentiment assures me that I shall not find you here on my return. Your restless foot, your truant heart, are wearying of the monotony of home; and when the green spring freshens the paths of the earth, you will away to the hill-sides, like a roebuck bursting from the hunters' toils."

Rumalie smiled. "Aloïska, love!" he replied, "Mayst thou never know how weary a thing it is to dwell in the contemplation of happiness which it is denied thee to share! Thy mother's sweet face hath brought back the dreams of my youth; —thine and thy brother's tenderness recall to my heart the children that were torn from me by a cruel death. Thou sayest truly,—my child! I am not happy here, in Vehlhá;—and the void in my heart,—that void by which I measure the immensity of the affections once treasured therein,—requires the excitation of travel and constant occupation, to render it endurable. I have

redeemed thy father's lands;—Gyorgy too is rich, and Aloïska happy. Nevertheless Rumalie the pedlar will one day renew his toil and traffic, and dedicate their first fruits as a dowry for thy children."

And when the mild spring air breathed freshly on the plains, and clothed the banks of the Vehlhá orchards with a sheet of blossom, Rumalie was indeed missed one morning from his accustomed haunts.—He hath never since returned into Thurotzer.

THE

FESTIVAL OF THE THREE KINGS.

-

THE

FESTIVAL OF THE THREE KINGS.

> I love thee,—but never more be officer of mine!
>
> *Othello.*

LONG and loudly did the discharge of the ordnance, planted upon the heights of Buda, echo among the cliffs of the Blocksberg, which overhang the Danube beyond its southern or Raïscian suburb, and the vine-covered hills by which the fortress is surrounded, — as the chill piercing morning of the 18th of January dawned over the plains of Ketschkémet.

What could be the motive of this untimely disturbance,— of these warlike demonstrations? Were the Turks arrived, and was the standard of the Prophet once more about to wave triumphantly on the walls of the capital of Hungary;

and by avenging upon Christendom in general the injuries of Navarino, to punish the duplicity and humiliate the arrogance of its Austrian ally?

The appearance of the city afforded fortunately no grounds for such an alarm. The few military companies by which the streets were lined, announced that their duties of the day tended rather towards the maintenance of peace than the hostilities of defence; and not a musket, not a pistol had been moved to disturb the goodly arrangement of the venerable arsenal of Buda, which can arm, on an emergency, fourscore and ten thousand men in the Imperial cause. The rusty cannon of the batteries had in short been roused from their inaction to announce the festival of the Magi, or *Three Kings,* which the Gregorian calendar assigns to the celebration of the Greek Church, twelve days later than our own.

The more dignified salutes of the fortress were emulated by the activity of every urchin who could beg or purloin *kreuzers* enough to add a petard to the consecrated tumult of Twelfth-day; and thus noisily apprised, the whole population of the rival cities of Buda and Pesth was soon

united on the shores of the Danube to witness the annual ceremony of blessing the waters. If indeed the Patriarchal benediction have any share in securing the marvellous fecundity of the prolific rivers of Hungary,* the assiduity of the populace may be readily accounted for; and the Magnat luxuriating over his fogas, and the Slowák appeasing the cravings of his hunger upon sturgeon, have equal reason to be liberal of their gunpowder and acclamations on the Feast of the Magi.

The incense had now been poured, and the imposing rites being ended within the Greek temple, the reverend Bishop who had journeyed from his residence at Munkatsch to perform the metropolitan ceremonies of the day, advanced with his jewelled mitre on his head, towards the shore. The crosier borne before him, the long, white beard, which bespoke reverence for his age, the company of gorgeously habited priests which followed his footsteps chanting the praises of God, the solemn demeanour of the reverend Prelate,—all conspired to affect the minds of the

* The Theiss is proverbially said to contain "two parts of water, and one of fish." There is a species of *cyprinus* which abounds in the reservoirs of the *hot* mineral springs at Gran.

multitude, and to hush them into silent awe as the procession moved along the bank to the appointed station. But the moment that the uplifted hands of the venerable man proclaimed to the assemblage, unto whom his voice was rendered inaudible by distance, that the benediction was pronounced, a deafening shout rose on either side the river, and thousands and tens of thousands echoed the invocation.

If the "many-headed monster thing,"—the crowd assembled on the rival shores,—were unanimous in their sympathy upon this occasion, and bound together by the mighty bond of a common interest, it was their sole point of union. There is no country in Europe inhabited by a greater variety of tribes than Hungary; each retaining a different costume,—many a different faith, a different language, and different mode of government,—and all exhibiting that diversity of habits, pursuits, and interests, which forms an insuperable obstacle to national union.

First among the tribes, may be considered that of the native Hungarian or Magyar;—proud, fierce, insolent,—retaining at once the ignorance

and the rude virtues of the dark ages.—The Croat and Sirmian, artful and persevering, and uniting something of the inspiration of a warmer sky to the national character, preserve a still richer costume than that of the Hungarian hussar uniform. A flapped hat, decorated with scarlet flowers or feathers,—a rich girdle appearing under the braided jerkin, replace the jacket covered with lace and silken buttons of the former. The inhabitants of the *militarische gränze*, or military frontiers, particularly those bordering upon Walachia,* profess the creed of the Greek Church, and exhibit a half Romaic fashion in their attire; but they have borrowed from their Turkish neighbours, customs and vices of Mahometan origin. Polygamy is still prevalent among them and authorized by their laws; which are in other respects of a strictly military character.

The Transylvanians, on the contrary, exhibit an affinity both physical and moral with the

* Bright asserts that there are sixteen hundred thousand Walachians domiciliated in the Austrian States. Hungary contains altogether but seven millions of inhabitants, and is supposed to possess resources for the support of a population of twenty millions.

Tâtar tribes, whose territories border the limits of their principality; while the northern inhabitants of Hungary, the Slowáks and mountaineers of Galicia, possess a personal superiority over all the rest; and, simple in character, strong in muscular frame, patient and enduring, form the most valuable source of recruitment for the Imperial army. Last in the catalogue, may be inscribed the Jews; who are abundantly scattered over the popular parts of the kingdom, and wear their gaberdines with the dignity of the prosperous;—while the Tzigány or gipsies,—a tribe whose outlawed condition will scarcely permit them to be included in the list, although more numerous and more industrious than the last-mentioned, mingle the shreds and patches of any finery, Oriental or European, of which they can possess themselves, with the coarse garments which appertain to their poverty.

But besides these native tribes, the streets of Pesth exhibit at all times a motley congregation of foreign costumes.—Turks and Greeks, Armenians and Tâtars, are attracted thither as the most advantageous mart and *entrepôt* for their

petty commerce with the western and northern countries of Europe, and the fair of Pesth is only secondary in importance to that of Leipsig; while the soft accents of Italy are added to the confusion of tongues by the Milanese regiments, which the policy of the Austrian government quarters throughout Hungary.

Having described the party-coloured materials of a mob upon the banks of the Danube, I will single from the throng one of the noblest and most characteristic figures of which it was composed. It was that of a tall, middle-aged man, whose lofty cap of sable-fur and crimson velvet—national boot, and sword on hip—proclaimed an Hungarian Senator. A very lovely girl, whose dress partook more of the fashion of the land than is usual in one of her degree, stood beside him; and occasionally provoked his rebuke by a slight start, as the petards of the urchins on the shore exploded around. The same Grecian line of countenance, the same commanding person, proclaimed their near relationship; even before his indignation that any boasting his blood should betray so soft a fibre, induced him to

exclaim, "and thou, too, Henrika, must have nerves, forsooth, like one of the dainty, silver-voiced dames of Vienna;—thou, too, must start and caper if but a gnat buz upon thy cheek! Out on thee for a changeling! Thy grandame, child, pointed a falconet against *Kara Mustapha* when he advanced his forces against Comorrn,—ay! and could bring down a roe at speed with a single bullet. What again!" exclaimed the old man, twisting his mustachios with indignation, as the poor girl renewed her irrepressible offence, "by St. Stephen! thou shalt breast the crowd alone, if again thou shrink but the width of a hair. Of all the curses that an honest man may be plagued withal, save me from a damsel whose silken nerves cannot bear up against the whizzing of a school-boy's squib!"

"Dearest father! in justice own that I am doing my best to emulate my valiant grandmother. Did I not venture within hearing of the great beam in the Kremnitz mine to please you; —and sit as silent as a Turk while the earth trembled around us with the vibration? And did I not follow the Archduchess in her journey on

the new English railway, although the woodwork cracking under our iron cars, reminded us that we were suspended twenty feet above our mother earth?"

"Well—lest we lose to-day thy hard-earned fame, Henríka, let us hie homewards, the ceremony is ended."

"Stay awhile—dear sir! I beseech you. The ferry left Buda at the moment of the Benediction; let us wait its coming."

Baron Tzekali, moved by his daughter's entreaties, or perhaps somewhat susceptible of the same curiosity which brings hundreds of the *flaneurs* of Pesth at the same hour to the crowded quay, consented to prolong his walk among the rows of leafless lindens, from which the gaping multitude was now dispersed; having ceded their places to the busy market-women who squatted themselves down among the coveys of sleepy turkeys, waiting with peaceful resignation the knife of the purchaser; or exhibited a most miraculous draught of fishes, in honour of the ceremony of the day. Here and there, the venders of chaplets and Turkish amulets spread

their little booths for the temptation of the market-girls, who were heaping their bowls of bright-red pepper—the *paprika* of Hungary, which more than rivals that of Cayenne; while above the murmur of their mutual chaffering, was heard the shrill trumpet of a stroller, whose basket and hat, decorated with gold leaf and artificial flowers, announced him as the manufacturer of the favourite *patisserie* of Hungary,—honey and poppy-seed cakes. I will not venture upon the classical title of these heroes of the oven, whose shrill pipes are to be heard in every street during the carnival; being orally communicated to me, I could only guess that it united every consonant in the alphabet, with a solitary vowel.

While Henríka continued to follow the Baron's course among these scattered groups, now pausing at his command to admire a carp of prodigious size, or a delicately diminutive tortoise, she failed not to keep a watchful eye upon a little boat, which, although it had left the opposite shore some minutes after the ferry, had already passed it on the stream. At length, after looking

earnestly upon a young man who sat at the helm, she exclaimed with breathless agitation, "now goodness preserve us, dearest father—it is, —it is Wenzl himself!"

"Thou hast said the same thing, child, of every passenger of every boat any time these three months past."

"But I am sure now, sir—quite sure;—look yourself, and you will own that it can be no other than my brother,—my dear—dear—Wenzl!"

"Szent Kerezst!" exclaimed the Baron, in a tone which caused the market-women to start up, and the turkeys to rustle in the straw, "wouldst thou persuade me that yonder frizzled, velveted, smooth-faced jackanape is a son of mine? Go to, girl—and shame on thy tongue;—'tis some mummer for the carnival,—some *Faschingzeit* manikin from Vienna."

"He is wrapt in a Carbonari mantle, papa,—they have been the rage ever since the Neapolitan campaign."

"*Carbonari? Carbo-teufel!*"—shouted the Baron, now distinguishing the features of his son. "I tell thee, Henrika, if I thought a

child of mine would desert the national habit to follow the degrading fashions of the corrupt Austrian capital, I could wish he might never cross the Danube again to flout my old eyes with his fooleries."

"Dearest father—*edes atyám!* deal not too severely with Wenzl on his arrival after so long an absence."

"Nay—stay by thyself then to welcome the buffoon; for the mortification of my soul might indeed urge me to other than gentle chiding." The old man stalked away through the crowd, with the yearnings of affection rising to his throat in spite of the vexation which irritated his feelings. All gave way respectfully for the passage of the most venerated of the Hungarian magnats, who had taken his seat in a provincial senate solely with a view to the maintenance of national rights, and who was even now one of the stormiest and most patriotic orators of the *Statthalterey*, and the sitting Diet.

The young Tzekali now leaped on shore, and directed his steps and most affectionate salutations to his trembling sister. "But my

father, Henríka, my father!—surely I saw him a minute past, standing on the quay beside you?"

"He is gone towards home."

"Then we will instantly follow him."

"Not yet, brother; not yet, dearest Wenzl. He is vexed and irritated, and it will be better to give him time to recover his mortifications."

"Irritated—by whom?—who has presumed to mortify my father?" and the young man's eyes sparkled with an indignation which became him far better than the Carbonari cloak.

"Even yourself,—good brother! What evil genius tempted you to visit Pesth in these tramontane accoutrements? You, who know the obstinacy of my father's national prejudices, what could induce you to arrive *botté à la Vilainton;* and with a shaven lip?"

"And is this all? *corpo di Bacco!* ye stiff-necked Magyari!* how hard must I labour to obtain your applause! But you are jesting Henríka, you cannot mean that my father affords me

* The aboriginal Hungarians.

this chilling reception, after three years' absence, as a vengeance upon my toilet?"

"It is, as you must remember, his weakest side."

"But why has he permitted me to run the gauntlet through half the courts in Europe,—why has he sanctioned my fox-hunting in *Lecetáshare,* and my lounging in the *Rue Vivienne,* if he wished me to return to Hungary the same lank-haired, silver-buttoned Hottentot I left the banks of the Danube? Does any nation but our own inflict the badge of hereditary bad taste upon the head and shoulders of a gentleman?—Why child, the very stones of Pall-Mall would rise up in reproof if the members of either House were to drag a clanking sabre after them along the pavement! But I do not interfere with his senatorial costume, let him leave mine to my valet and my conscience."

"*Let him leave*—oh! Wenzl, is that an expression to use towards my father?"

"My boots, my cloak!" reiterated the young man to himself, "truly a very flattering and very tender reception. Did he expect to see me in a

Slowák's sheep's-skin mantle,—with my dangling locks leaded up in lard, and my boots stuffed with hay like the filthy boat-men who rowed me over? Pah! their poisonous exhalations all but stifled me;" and the young Baron took a highly-scented handkerchief from his bosom, as if to overpower the remembrance.

Henríka shook her head, for she was well persuaded that the odours of *bouquet de Florence* would prove as offensive to her father as those of a well-larded Slowák shirt (annually renewable), to his travelled son. "Shall we go home brother?" said she, turning hesitatingly from the arcade of the custom-house, under which they were standing.

"Not at present, Henríka. Since the Baron is so little interested in the return of an only son, I shall wait the arrival of the ferry. My *valet de chambre* who speaks no German, and still less of our own barbarous jargon, will be puzzled to get my barouche landed without the aid of a few of my Patrician oaths."

"A French valet,—a barouche," interrupted Henríka aghast. "Wenzl, are you mad?"

"Why did you expect, *Schwesterlein feine*, that I should return in the old rattlebones of a britschka which my father bestowed on me at parting? I made a bonfire of it at Milan."

"But to bring a foreign carriage into Hungary."

"To Hungary,—where, at Kittsee, my father swears they were invented, long before a road existed in the kingdom! '*Kittsee, kutsche, cocher, coach, cocchio!*' Spare me the derivation, dear Henríka; for the only thing I can recollect of my childish erudition is this etymological apology for the mouse-trap on wheels, which used to bear our family emblazonments."

"And a *valet de chambre!* What have you done with poor Horosk your *jäger?*"

"I bartered him with the Russian ambassador a year ago at Paris; and I have now the good fortune to possess one of the first artists in Europe."

"An artist?"

"My *kammerdiener*—Le Marchant—*perle de la valétocratie Parisienne; qui réunit à tous les talens une adresse de Figaro; qui rivalise avec Lubin*

pour la distillation des parfums, avec le Fidèle Berger pour la confection des diablotins! Enfin dès demain, il va te faire essuyer le coup de peigne d'Alexandre en te coëffant à la Grecque; car je t'avertis, chère petite sœur, que pour le moment tu es d'une tournure à faire horreur!"

"And how do you imagine this *muscadin* will exist in the atmosphere of old Wisperl's ante-room? It will cost him his salary in *ambre* and *vanille* to overcome the vapours of tobacco and garlic."

"Oh! I shall give him a *suite, au second*, in my own hotel; and instead of starving upon *schnitzel* and *sauerkraut*, he shall supervise the *cuisine* of the Swiss cook I engaged at Vienna."

Henríka Tzekali's spirits were now entirely gone; she was *overcrowed*,—she felt that the domestic peace of their little household was ended. Her father, the Baron, was unfortunately one of the most vehement and prejudiced descendants of the ancient Magyari of the kingdom;—that class which by its ill-timed adherence to obsolete customs, and its pertinacious exaction of pernicious privileges has assisted in the ruin of the country.

to which its pride and affections are fatally attached. Loathing the foreign yoke which Hungary in her days of humiliation imposed upon herself as a refuge from the still more bitter bondage of Turkish tyranny,—he could find no better means of marking his hatred and contempt towards Austria, than by opposing the few beneficial regulations she had been pleased to introduce into her tributary kingdom. He lifted up his voice against every plan suggested by the *Statthalterey* for the instruction of the peasantry, lest they should become unwilling to retain the national language, a language equally destitute of written literature, and of the common terms requisite in commercial intercourse; for until the reign of Joseph II., a native artisan was not to be found in Hungary, nor a single manufactory except those conducted by German or Italian mechanics.—As a rallying point against the Austrian residents, the Baron insisted upon the strict preservation of the national costume upon his estates; and there was no surer passport to his good-will, than the cultivation of a pair of sweeping mustachios; an appendage which, like

the *coolin* of Ireland, has been alternately proscribed as the symbol of insubordination, and cherished as a badge of independence.

The same narrow-sighted policy prompted him to oppose every plan for the erection of a permanent bridge across the Danube,—which would form, in the union of Buda and Pesth, one of the finest cities of western Europe,—lest it should secure facilities of communication with the Empire. Nay, so firm was his faith in the national dogma, "*Extra Ungariam non est vita; si est vita, non est ita*," that he sent his only son to make the tour of the world, persuaded that he would return to his own degraded uncivilized country, with an overcoming sense of her supremacy. The Hungarians indeed are secondary only to the Chinese in vain-gloriousness and self-sufficiency; and the *morgue* both national and personal of an untravelled Magyar, is only to be equalled by his ignorance of the world.

Wenzl, the young Baron Tzekali, had been acutely sensible from his early youth, to these mortifying truths; and becoming anxious to add his patronymic to those of the Esterhazys,

Batthianys, and some others which belong rather to the history of Europe than to the obscure annals of their native country, he profited by his father's sanction and by the independent fortune he derived from his mother, to perfect the developement of his mind and the refinement of his taste in more enlightened and more polished realms. Let it not be supposed from his affected adoption of the jargon of the day, nor even from the Carbonari cloak, that he had contracted only the follies and vices of foreign countries to the neglect of higher considerations. Before he quitted the land of his fathers, Wenzl had suffered deeply from a boyish, but very strong attachment, of which the course had run any thing but smoothly. The mortification and sorrow he had experienced on seeing the object of his affections on the point of marriage with another, had hastened his abrupt departure, and secured his prolonged absence from Hungary; and now, at length recalled by the pressing instances of his father and sister, he attempted to conceal, by a tone of frivolous levity, the agitation of his heart on setting foot upon that native

land where he had suffered so intensely. He was come, too, resolved to *faire événement*,—to make himself admired and regretted; and as he knew the contemptible character of the minds he wished to subjugate, in order to people his empire he had himself assumed that semblance best calculated to further his views.

In the mean time Henríka was silently watching the approach of the *barouche*, and the *artiste* who presided over her brother's toilet; secretly satisfied that the eruptive powers of Hecla, Etna, and Vesuvius united, might fail to produce an explosion as awful as that of her father's indignation, on the arrival of this importation of foreign luxury into the land of the Magyars.

"I have been anxiously looking forward to your arrival, Wenzl, for many weeks; but now you are come at last, forgive me if I almost wish you were back again in the *Chaussée d'Antin*. My poor father will be so enraged, or still worse, will be so deeply grieved by your change of habits and character, that I can anticipate nothing but a troubled home and a disunited family."

"Dearest Henríka, you wrote to me so urgently,

that however personally disinclined for the journey, I could not but obey your summons. I thought you might require my assistance in some exigency of your own affairs;—that my father might perhaps be pleased to destine your hand to some young scion of native nobility,—some horse-breaking, bear-baiting, drinking, dicing braggadocio, who, in virtue of an ancient name, feels privileged to shoot his peasants, and persecute his wife;—one whom my father would qualify as rather '*frisch,*' and whom I should consider no less than brutal. Is it so Henríka? From what evils can your brother's presence preserve you?"

"*Now* you speak like the Wenzl of old times; now you look like my dear Hungarian brother; I pray you never speak French to me,—it sounds like the language of deception! Frankly then, in reply to your inquiries, it was of *you,* not of myself I thought, when I implored you to return to us. My father is growing old, Wenzl; his eyes are becoming dim with years; his voice is changed; even his proud gait and stern address are yielding under the heaviness of time. His

last days should not be lonely, while he has a living son to console and support him."

"True Henríka, most true; and believe me, that my time shall be devoted to the study of his humours. When the spring returns, we will visit Croatia together;—the brisk air of the fields will invigorate his heart, and the activity of the chase animate his body."

"A mere temporary effect! No,—Wenzl, his hopes and happiness are fixed upon seeing you married and settled in your native country. Do not disappoint him, for the reproaches of a father's dying hour must be dreadful to bear."

"*Married*—me!—and to a countrywoman I presume; to some Hungarian Countess, ignorant and narrow-minded,—dowdy and dull, yet possessing none of the household virtues which usually appertain to dowdiness and dulness. Undomestic in her habits,—uncleanly in her person,—ungainly in her address"—

"To your French again, Wenzl! I beg of you, since our vulgar tongue renders you so *un*courtteous. On my word your sister and Michaëla are obliged to you."

"*Michaëla!*"

"You start as if the name were new to you;—you turn pale;—dear Wenzl, what ails you?"

"Sister—you sport severely with my feelings; my levity scarcely merited this rebuke!"

"Rebuke! when I thought only of giving you pleasure! Before you quitted Pesth, I sometimes suspected that you were not indifferent to Michaëla, and"—

"Indifferent, alas! did I not leave her engaged to the oldest and ugliest judge of the Septemviral court?"

"True,—the contract was already drawn; but the poor girl, who had from the first betrayed her disinclination for the marriage, took courage, the very day previous to that fixed for the ceremony, and threw herself upon the mercy of her venerable admirer. She told him the truth,—that she did not love him; and that perhaps he had already guessed. She added something however which neither he nor any other person had conjectured,—that she had a strong attachment elsewhere."

"Henrika!"

"And thus enlightened, the old President thought it but prudent to withdraw his pretensions. The world indeed was only given to understand that some pecuniary objection had arisen between the families; and poor Michaëla has remained ever since a victim to her father's displeasure, and supported only by her own conscience and by the approval of the kindest of mothers!"

"And you never told me a word of this in your letters!"

"Did you not, on your departure, expressly forbid me to name any inhabitant of Pesth, save my father and my worthless self?"

"I feared you might fill your pages with details of Michaëla's — of Baroness Grawicz's new establishment. But an attachment!—so young,—so timid,—so retiring! who would have guessed it."

"Who would have guessed it?—why yourself Wenzl, if you had possessed the eyes of a mole, or the ears of a woodcock!—yourself, Wenzl, whom she had cherished from her earliest infancy. If you could but have seen her counte-

nance when I told her that my father was bent on making overtures for a marriage between you! But it is all over now; changed as you are, and entertaining so sovereign a contempt for your countrywomen, how could she hope for happiness?"

At this moment the Buda ferry boat touched the strand; and a voice was immediately heard whose *mielleux* accents contrasted most divertingly with the expressions they conveyed. "*Hola! coquin, —maraud,— bête d'enfer! —Veux tu bien retirer tes mains crasseuses de dessus la voiture de son Excellence? —Hola! aux secours! —Bonte du ciel! le vernis va se perdre sous l'attouchement de ce vrai Osâge!*"

"Le Marchant! said the young Baron, advancing towards him and withdrawing the 'pride of the valetocracy' from the crowd, "*Pourrois-tu me dire au juste ce que je te dois de gages et de fournitures?*"

"*Monsieur le Baron oublie, sans doute, qu'il m'a réglé mon petit livret il y a huit jours?*"

"*Bon!—et tu retiens à compte?*"—

The astonished artist took from his velvet purse some forty or fifty ducats.

"Va mon ami,—je te les livre pour frais de voyage. A Vienne tu vendras à ton profit la voiture Angloise, car je sens que l'air de ce pays baroque ne pourra te convenir. Ici point d'Opéra,—point de Frascati,—et force coups de bâton. Adieu, Le Marchant! Le Chevalier de Melfort, à qui je ferai passer tes certificats, te placera avantageusement à Paris, où ton mérite te rappelle."

The *élève d'Hyppolite* was petrified; but he had long known the vivacity of his master's movements,—the strength of his determination; *au reste* the value of the barouche, and the remembrance of the disgusts he had already experienced in Hungary, reconciled him to this abrupt dismissal.

"*En effet,*" he replied, "*Monsieur le Baron qui sait si bien apprécier le vrai talent, doit reconnôitre que le mien seroit déplacé et se perdroit en ce chien de pays. Mais en offrant mes adieux à son Excellence, j'ose assurer que si jamais il revient habiter le monde civilisé*"—

"*J'y renonce, Le Marchant, et pour la vie. Adieu! veille à tes intérêts, car le pont est en mouvement.*"

Scarcely a week after his arrival at Pesth, Wenzl was seen traversing the *Szervítåk' Piàtza* in boots with fixed spurs. The mantle which had so disgusted his father, was exchanged for a *dolman;* and a pair of budding mustachios shaded his upper lip. The alteration, however striking, might be easily accounted for; he was accompanying two ladies,—one of them was the gentle, good Henríka; the other was a still fairer, still more graceful person, to whom hi words were addressed in the lowest tone, and prefaced by the name of "Dearest Michaëla!"

Under these circumstances, and ignorant of the existence of the barouche and the artist, it will easily be believed that Baron Tzekali is the happiest father in Hungary; and that he promises himself in future to make a family festival of the eventful *day of the Three Kings.*

THE INFANTA AT PRESBURG.

THE INFANTA AT PRESBURG.

CHAPTER I.

> Sans égard à la qualite
> Au rang, à la naissance,
> Son air, sa grace, sa beauté,
> Veulent la préférence.
> On voit le sang de ses aieux
> Dans ses traits et sa mine,
> Et tout retrace dans ses yeux,
> Sa noble origine.
>
> ANTOINE COMTE HAMILTON.

THE narrow streets of Vienna were thronged with a joyous multitude, and a clear sharp autumnal sunshine insinuated its way between the lofty houses by which they are overshadowed; falling alternately upon the tapestries or crimson banners suspended from the windows,—the verdant garlands and mimic crowns of roses with which

they were intermingled,—and finally upon the radiant sea of heads occupying the area below. The peasants from the Wienerwald displayed in countless multitudes, their towering caps of gold brocade, and the Linzerinnen their glittering winged *cornettes;* but even these could not match with the various splendour of the military uniforms scattered among the people. Towards the *Burg Platz* or palace-square, indeed, the streets were lined with the gorgeous Hungarian and Imperial guards; and several companies of artillery, as well as a regiment of Bohemian Hussars were on duty in the square of St. Michael. From an early hour, pieces of ordnance had been discharged at measured intervals upon the bastions; the bells of the numerous churches now increased the animation caused by the murmuring voice of thousands; and at length the single solemn toll of St. Stephen's silver bell, which strikes like an organ-peal upon the ear, announced that the solemnities of the day were about to commence. Joseph,—the future Emperor,—the first-born of the mighty Maria Theresa, was about to receive at the altar the hand of the Infanta of Parma!

Already the civil ceremonies had been concluded; already the magnificent array of gilded chariots, and horses sinking under the weight of their embroidered trappings, had passed the arched gate of the palace on its flower-strewn road towards the Augustiner, or Aulic church. Two heralds of the Empire opened the gay procession; each several carriage was preceded by running footmen with plumed caps, and brocaded sashes, and followed by a detachment of Heiducks or Hussars, in rich uniforms; while at intervals a gorgeous company of trumpeters, mounted on milk-white horses, rent the air with their brazen music, pausing only to give way to the bursting acclamations of the populace, aided by loyal cheers from the surrounding windows; which were crowded with all the beauty, youth or rank of the empire.

The popularity of the reigning family, the liberal distributions that had been made in honour of so auspicious an alliance, the numerous fountains of Vienna glittering with *Bisamberger* wine, and more than all the propitious brilliancy of the weather, conspired to gladden the scene, and to

dispose every spectator to mirth and festivity. It seemed as if sorrow could hold no influence upon any heart in the city at a moment of such general exultation.

Yet there was one among that brilliant assemblage, whose very soul shuddered at the tumultuous joy displayed around; whose ear was deaf to the inspiring music which filled the air,—whose eye recoiled from the glittering confusion of gems and chivalrous orders by which it was dazzled on every side: this was the shrinking bride,—the young and lovely Isabella.

The altar before which she stood, was almost concealed by the draperies of snowy muslin, and garlands of orange blossom with which it was decorated; and blooming trees from the Schönbrunn orangerie, filled the intervening niches. The mightiest of the Empire were ranged around;—the houses of Esterhazy, Lichtenstein, — Palffy, — Lobkowitz, — Auersperg, — Schwarzenberg,—had put forth their pride to grace the solemnity; but distinguished above them all, by his graceful address and ancient Spanish costume, radiant with the diamonds of the crown,

appeared the youthful bridegroom himself. The Archduke, who had scarcely completed his twenty-first year, was even then remarkable for that animated intelligence of countenance, and graceful dignity of gesture, which in after years exerted a successful influence upon those most hostile to his arbitrary political views. But neither the beauty of his person nor the flattering smiles which elated his clear blue eyes, could dispel the painful retrospections of the Infanta, as she knelt by his side at the high altar.

Conscious of the observation fixed upon her very slightest movement, and still more deeply sensible of the importance of the duties to which she was about to lend her vows, the Princess, through a strong effort of fortitude, attempted to dismiss the terrors by which she was overcome, and to occupy her mind exclusively by the holy rites; and notwithstanding the perturbation which had oppressed her mind as she traversed the crimson-velvet footcloth that lined her passage to the altar, she was soon enabled to listen with eager and devout attention to the exhortations of the officiating Cardinal:—her responses

were as articulately pronounced as her vows of conjugal faith were piously and sincerely undertaken. At length the marriage anthem resounded from the choir, re-echoed by the fretted arches of the lofty roof, as Joseph, turning towards his tearful and trembling bride, bound round her graceful head the nuptial garland, and imprinted upon her forehead the kiss of usage: and even to his keen observation, the dejection of her countenance appeared but the natural and becoming expression of her regrets on leaving her family, and native country; and on finding herself a stranger in a land of strangers. Her air of constraint seemed indeed to enhance the charm of her highly expressive countenance. Her eyes, full-orbed and dark as those of an antelope, her raven hair and crimson lips accorded well with the clear Spanish complexion which, but for the redeeming beauty of her features, would have borne an unfavourable comparison with the snowy brows of the Archduchesses, her new sisters; who at that period presented a group of youthful loveliness, rarely equalled even in the inferior classes of life.

Several of these Princesses officiated as bride-maidens to the Infanta; and at her right hand, stood the Emperor and Empress;—the former an interested,—the latter an observant spectator. To the mind of Maria Theresa indeed, accustomed as she was from childhood to the sway of empire, and estimating perhaps too highly the prerogative to which her very existence seemed united, the disinclination evinced by the Princess of Parma to share the prospect of an Imperial diadem, afforded grounds for suspicion and distrust. It was well known to every member of the court of Vienna, excepting the Archduke himself, that on the first application of the Austrian ambassadors to Don Philip of Parma, for the hand of his daughter, the Infanta had openly declared her abhorrence of the match; and that on their presentation to the young Princess herself, towards the conclusion of their negociations, she had received them with tears and remonstrances. But Don Philip was too conscious of the political value of so splendid an alliance to permit the repugnance of his daughter to thwart his projects; and although the unfortunate Isabella

earnestly implored permission to take the veil, in preference to an eternal separation from her native country, her objections had been disregarded or overruled.

Upon the arrival of the Infanta on the Austrian frontier, where she was warmly and dutifully welcomed by an illustrious deputation of the nobles of Vienna, and by the German ladies who were hereafter to form her establishment, she parted frem her Italian attendants with a struggle of mind which her ingenuous temper sought not to conceal from her new associates; and in reply to some tedious courtly speech of compliment, by which they purposed to dissipate her grief, and to unfold to her comprehension the glories of the mighty empire she was destined to rule, and over which her posterity might reign, even unto remote ages, the Princess was moved to exclaim, "Why talk to me of a throne?—it is a grave only I shall find in Germany! Trust to my prediction, that I shall never live to become the mother of a race of kings!"

These facts had been carefully reported to the Empress; who, while she acknowledged in the

tale, sufficient grounds for uneasiness and a future scrutiny, was at the same time re-assured by the indiscreet and childish candour with which the Infanta had exposed her feelings to observation. As the marriage had been solemnized immediately upon her Serene Highness's arrival at Vienna, Maria Theresa was still undetermined whether this excess of candour,—a quality so rare in the purlieus of the courts of kings, and for many years past, so unfamiliar to her own bosom,—had not its origin in mental weakness; and it was only after a prolongation of familiar intercourse, that the Empress permitted herself to recognize the strength of mind and singleness of heart, of which the rare union so embellished and endeared the character of the young Archduchess.

Many circumstances tended however to retard this change of sentiment. The Archduke himself, her youthful bridegroom, possessed at the period of his marriage a very secondary interest in the hearts of his parents; whose partial fondness was engrossed, as that of their reigning successor is at present said to be, by their

younger son. The Archduke Charles was indeed a youth of the highest promise and endowments; but it is probable that his daring impetuosity of character would have proved a source of family discord, if not of national calamity, had not a premature death removed him from the pernicious tenderness of the Empress, shortly after the marriage of his brother. "Lament not so bitterly my approaching end," said he, to the weeping Maria Theresa, in his latter moments. "Had I lived, madam, my irascible temper would have surely afforded you greater cause for sorrow." *

Until this melancholy period, the talents and disposition of the Archduke Joseph had been illiberally appreciated by the Imperial family. His reserved and gentle demeanour was mistaken by the Empress, who piqued herself upon a bold and masculine cast of understanding, for want of energy or ability; and vainly did his more discerning governor, Marshal Batthiany, who detected in his character the germ of that acute and independent spirit which, in after-life,

* Historical.

qualified him as a companion for philosophers, as well as a regenerator for a degraded nation, repeat his favourable prognostications concerning the heir apparent.

It was principally to the marriage of which the inauspicious commencement has been detailed, that Joseph was indebted for the change that soon occurred in the feelings entertained towards him by his family, as well as by the nation at large,—which already regarded him in the anxious light of its future sovereign. The ceremonies and festivities consequent upon his august nuptials, necessarily forced him from the retirement in which he had been hitherto secluded; and the ardent affection with which he was soon inspired by his young and lovely wife, imparted an air of joyousness and interest to his countenance, which wholly overcame the vacuity of his former phlegmatic reserve. For the first time, he mixed freely, not only in the society of the court, but in the public diversions of the capital. At the theatres, in the gallery of the splendid *manège*, and the noble *Redouten-Saal*, Joseph was frequently observed in attendance upon the Arch-

duchess, whose mantle he carried *en bourgeois* upon his arm; omitting no opportunity of testifying towards her his respect and love. Sometimes the Princess, anxious to familiarize the eyes of the people with the frank and captivating address of their future monarch, would draw him into the public walks of Vienna, or share his sledge upon the Prater; and upon all occasions sought to remove, by her own ingratiating manners and beneficent actions, the unjust prejudice that had been excited against her husband.

Some among the courtiers already began to prophesy that the extreme popularity of the Archduchess Joseph would in time become offensive to Maria Theresa; whose sway over the affections of the people had been so long undivided, that she had learned to consider it indivisible; and that a mere want of tact on the part of the Italian Princess, led her to court these *open* demonstrations of regard. Others accused her of paying a mean court to the Empress, by her acknowledged preference of the Archduchess Christina,—her eldest and favourite daughter. Whether the superior mind of Maria Theresa

elevated her above that common weakness of Princes,—a mean jealousy of her successor,—or whether in truth she saw and appreciated the purity and artlessness of the Infanta's mind, it is certain that she soon conceived towards her, sentiments of warm maternal affection; and fondly courted her unrestrained intercourse with the Imperial family.

"*Il n'y a rien de si adroit qu'une conduite irréprochable,*" says a modern sage; and in this instance, a total ignorance or disdain of courtly arts, became the means of conciliating that general good will, which the wariness of a finished tactician might have vainly sought to secure.

Among the warmest of Isabella's adherents, were the young Archduchesses, her sisters-in-law. The readiness with which she forwarded their amusements, or lent them aid in those pursuits of literature and art, in which an Italian education had perfected her own superior talents,—and still more the total absence of rivality in her feelings towards them, confirmed their first predilection in her favour. Yet thus beloved, thus deservedly cherished,—the idol of her husband,

the darling of the nation,—anxiously sharing the amusements of her family, and executing the private and public duties of her station, endowed with "golden opinions from all sorts of men," Isabella, in her hours of retirement, was uniformly dejected and sorrowful.

Various were the surmises that arose among the numerous members of the court, concerning the secret causes of this untimely and unaccountable melancholy. The Archduchesses perceived, that although she listened cheerfully, and conversed freely on general topics, she avoided all recurrence to her early life; and was never tempted into details of the habits of her native country. Sometimes, indeed, her younger sisters, moved by the eager curiosity of childhood, would question her of the observances and customs of Italy. "How?" she would answer with a smile, "am I not then a German, like yourselves? I have renounced and forgotten Parma; and I pray you, do not remind me that I am only your *adopted* countrywoman."

Even to the Archduchess Christina, her favourite friend and companion she was no less

measured in her confidence; and one day, when her Italian letters seemed to have aggravated the despondency of her heart, Christina, dreading lest her depth of affliction should prove injurious to her unborn child, made eager inquiries into the nature of a communication that had proved so distressing, Isabella replied by intreating her perusal of the letters she still held in her hand; which, to the surprise of the Archduchess, contained only the most uninteresting details; and were indeed little calculated to excite the feelings she had witnessed. From that period, the Infanta regularly offered to her inspection, all her correspondence with her own family; and entirely dissipated a suspicion that they still held an undue influence over her mind.

But of all those who witnessed and grieved over the mysterious sadness of the Archduchess, her husband himself was the most lenient in his judgment concerning her state of mind, and the most sincerely anxious to brighten her destiny. The extreme youth of Joseph had fortunately secured him from forming any of those fatal attachments which frequently embitter the wedded

life of royalty. He loved Isabella with the warmth of a first affection; passionately—tenderly! He would have given kingdoms,—and they were almost at his disposal,—to have believed this affection returned. He felt that to be beloved by a being so gentle, so gifted, so humbly devout, so purely lovely, would be a destiny indeed worthy of an emperor. But he could not deceive *himself*, however he might succeed in blinding the rest of the world, as to the indifference of her feelings towards him. He saw that her gentle complacency was solely motived by submission, and a sense of duty; that she had never sought in his looks an approving smile of tenderness,—never sprung into his embrace after long absence. Her eyes strayed not after him when he mingled with the gorgeous crowd by which she was surrounded; nor brightened into joy when it dispersed to leave him again by her side. Over these facts, and many other trifles which form eras in a life of love, the Archduke brooded in silent sorrow; and every day his own anxious attentions to the Infanta, attentions which he could not but believe importunate, declined

in their ardour; he assumed in his turn that semblance of estrangement which he believed to be most grateful to her feelings.

At other times, after long and solitary rumination upon his painful and mortifying position, he would suddenly accuse himself of want of energy, in failing to establish his claims upon her heart.

"I will tear aside the veil!" he exclaimed one morning, as he traversed under the excitation of such feelings, one of the stately corridors of the palace of Schönbrunn. "I will myself penetrate the clouds that darken her mysterious mind;—I will demand her confidence in right of the vows which make her mine. Nay, by Heavens! she *must*, she *shall* love me; for I can no longer endure this cold reserve!"

But the formalities of announcement, and the ceremonial exacted by her ladies in waiting, tended to subdue his irritation on his entrance to the Archduchess's *suite* of apartments. In reply to his inquiries, he learned that Isabella was occupied with letters in her *boudoir*, and had commanded that no intrusion might interrupt her employment. "Would his Imperial Highness deign to return in the afternoon?"

"No! now, or never more!" replied Joseph, in a hurried agitated voice; and desiring that the ladies of honour would suffer him to enter unannounced, he took his way through several resplendent but now deserted chambers of state, and reached the door of the *boudoir*, where he paused to gather breath and presence of mind for his purpose. The golden latch yielded in silence to his careful touch.

It was a fairy cell, that *boudoir!* Who has not distinguished it among the wilderness of gilded galleries, and tapestried saloons at Schönbrunn?—its simple walls delicately covered with embossed straw,—its furniture of snow-white glossy maple wood,—its draperies of the palest sea-green silk. A lute lay upon the marble window seat; a few rare flowers were scattered by the side of a half-finished miniature upon the desk,—but no living creature was there! Joseph trembled as he approached the painting. Might not Isabella's secret be unfolded upon that tiny ivory? Stimulated by an agony of apprehension, he cast one hasty but decisive glance upon—a portrait of *himself!*

Agitated by this discovery, though still haunted by a painful perplexity of mind, he gazed round the room for some token that might explain her absence. A slight current of air seemed to agitate one of its silken draperies. True! he remembered now; the door of an adjoining oratory was concealed beneath, and gently unclosing the entrance, the object of his search was before him;—but in how sad, how afflicting a position! Prostrate upon the marble floor,—her dark hair dishevelled and veiling her face,—breathing quick sobs of sorrow or of penitence,—Isabella lay at his feet!

Very tenderly, and very silently he raised the sufferer in his arms, and imprinted a kiss upon the pale cheek, bathed with tears, that now drooped upon his shoulder; nor did she seek to extricate herself from his embrace. "Isabella! dearest Isabella," said he, clasping her to his bosom, "why are you here at this hour, and wherefore thus? You condemn me to long days of absence from your side; you withdraw yourself from a society which lives but in your presence; is it only to indulge in wayward melancholy?"

The Archduchess threw a tearful glance round the little chamber. It was destitute of all ornament, save an unframed picture, a glorious representation of the Holy Mother of God, by the hand of Guido, and a tall and unadorned crucifix standing on a flight of marble steps; the cushion before the *Mutter Gottes* was worn with kneeling.

"There is surely nothing here," said she, "which can displease you as the companion of my solitude."

"It is yourself,—your precious self whose companionship alarms me!" replied Joseph. "Why cultivate this gloomy devotion,—this austere penitence, at the cost of your health, and of my happiness? But if these are alike indifferent to your heart, I beseech you remember that a mighty empire awaits your promised heir. Isabella! forget not your unborn child."

"Forget it!" exclaimed the shuddering Princess,—"would, would that it were possible! Its claims form the bane of my existence!"

"How! would you then deny it the inheritance of a mother's affection? the inheritance of the meanest cradle guarded by the blessings of my

poorest subject? Does your faith, Isabella, forbid the indulgence of so sweet an instinct? Then little is it influenced by the Creator's will."

"Hush!" whispered Isabella, pressing her hand tenderly upon his lips. "I have heard your chiding, bear in turn with my reproof; and promise me, dear Joseph, to repress that evil impulse which sometimes leads you into light mention of religious ordinances."

"Thanks,—thanks!" said the Archduke. "Reprove me, teach me, direct my faith; for every instance of your regard is precious in my sight. But you must love me, too; only love me! I seek no other concession."

The Archduchess started.

"And surely my unqualified devotion may win *some* favour in your sight? Our marriage, it is true, was planned in a state council; our young hearts were not consulted; and mine, I confess it, revolted against this arbitrary disposal of its affections. But you came,—and they were yours at once,—wholly, wholly yours! From the moment my eyes had rested upon Isabella

every other earthly object became a blank. Yes! the Empress gave me life,—but she has effaced that gift by a far more precious endowment;—by your hand,—I must not say your heart."

"If it were possible"—the Archduchess began—

"No! no!"—interrupted Joseph, "that measured voice bodes me no good. I will hear but one word from your lips; my Isabella—only tell me that you love me!"

The Princess seemed roused by his vehemence to some new train of ideas. "*Love* you?" faltered she, withdrawing herself from his arms. "Love *you!* oh! no, no!—such tenderness would be my ruin. Indifference alone can palliate my wretchedness. Love you! Heaven in its mercy forbid."

"Isabella!" exclaimed the Archduke passionately, again attempting to fold her to his heart. "These words are madness,—I cannot give them faith,—I will not. In the sight of all Europe you are mine,—in the sight of God,—my own, my wife! If it is your will to rend these ties asunder, speak!—if they must still exist, they shall not be thus evaded!"

"Oh! merciful Heaven!" said the Princess fervently, as she hastily ascended the marble steps, and clasped her arms around the crucifix, "spare me this trial. Suffer not my bleeding heart to be divided from thee;—let me not have implored thee in vain! Go!" she continued, turning towards her husband, yet still retaining her hold upon the cross, "Go,—leave me,—in peace with God,—in charity with thee."

Joseph, fearful of increasing her unreasonable agitation, departed in silence from the presence of the Infanta; and escaping through a private gate into the solitary groves of the park, he strove to subdue by reflection and reasoning, the tremour of his own frame How ill had his attempt prospered,—how little availed to dispel his anxieties, or to resolve his doubts!—sometimes he attributed to delirium,—to temporary frenzy, the strange expressions of his wife. But then her settled melancholy?—he had found her, however, occupied in retracing his features in her unobserved retirement. This was the sole consolation he had derived from his intrusion; and it was one which renewed his eager hope that time and

the birth of her child would dispose her in his favour. Meanwhile they met again upon the following day,—oh! marvellous restraint of etiquette that can school both voice and feature! —as if no unusual interest had been excited between them.

CHAPTER II.

A LIFE that glitters with the glare
Of gem, and plume, and broidered vest,
And all that's bright and all that's fair,
May wake to joy the careless breast;
Youth in its sunny glance may smile,
Content assume a warmer glow,—
As the charmed statue's tones, awhile
Beneath the noontide radiance flow.

But, oh! when sorrow's secret dart
Rankles within,—unguessed,—unseen,—
How witheringly the drooping heart
Shrinks from the pageant's gaudy scene,—
Shrinks from the jewelled rays that shine
In mockery of each falling tear,—
Shrinks from the flowers that idly twine
Like garlands scattered o'er a bier!

The deepest sighs that e'er were breathed
Have been in pleasure's festal bower;
Ne'er were its blossomed shades enwreathe
But tear-drops gemmed *some* bud or flower.
The torches burn,—the springing floor
Rebounds beneath the dancers' feet!—
I tell thee hearts are there, which more
Would grace a lonely winding sheet.

> Look on their brows,—I own them fair,—
> Look on their steps,—I own them light
> As film upon the summer air,—
> As dream of childhood's vague delight.
> But who can tell, oh! who can tell
> How throb those brows on which we gaze,
> Or what unhallowed thoughts impel
> Those footsteps through the world's dark maze!
>
> VANE.

The affectionate interest with which the Archduchess Joseph was regarded by the Empress, induced her to devise a thousand schemes for her diversion, and imagine a thousand flattering attentions to win her from her sadness.

One morning early in the summer, when the copper roofs of the palace were beginning to glare offensively on the eye, Maria Theresa persuaded her daughter-in-law to accompany her in an airing through the *Vorstädte*. These suburbs form the most important part of the city of Vienna; for having been burned, as untenable, during the last Turkish siege, they are principally constructed of handsome modern mansions; and contain several splendid summer-palaces of the nobility, situated in the midst of enchanting gardens.

As the carriages of the Princesses approached the Leopoldstadt,—the island suburb formed by the Danube, or rather by the paltry canals which diverge from that noble stream in order to afford the advantages of its navigation to Vienna,—the Hungarian guard which had preceded the carriage, suddenly halted and drew up in a line opposite to a stone gateway; and Isabella,—on entering a garden of the most enchanting distribution, a perfect "bower of bliss,"—perceived that every flowery parterre was formed into her cipher, and that the fountains, in throwing their jets of silvery wire upon the *carillons* whose tinkling sound mingled with the plash of their waters, were directed so as to enlace her initials with those of the Archduke.

The Princess, betrayed into her natural self for a moment, warmly expressed the most artless admiration of the fairy delusions by which she was surrounded; and when the Empress pressed the whole upon her acceptance with a maternal kiss, she received this token of affectionate regard with the gratitude and exultation of a child. Maria Theresa drew her arm within her own, in

order to conduct her to a temple of Parian marble, commanding a view of the Moravian mountains, and of the nearer heights of the purple Leopoldsberg. Rising majestically above the silver waters of the Danube, these glorious hills form a noble object from the Augarten,* the public garden planted by Joseph after his accession to the throne, and resigned to the pleasures of his subjects; while for his solitary wanderings he retained only the small adjoining pleasure-ground consecrated by the memory of his wife.

A bust of the Archduke ornamented the temple. "This, dearest Isabella," said the Empress, "is at present but the temple of Hope; I trust

* The gate of the Augarten bears an inscription recording that it is "dedicated to the amusement of the world in general." "*Allen menschen gewidmeter Erlustigungsort, von ihrem schätzer.*" The *noblesse* of Vienna once expostulated with their sovereign upon this unnecessary liberality, and implored him to shut up the Augarten and the Prater from the access of the citizens: in order as they represented, that they might themselves be approached only by their equals. "Were I," said the Emperor in his reply, "to confine myself to the society of my equals, I might pass the remainder of my days in the vault of my ancestors; nor would you now be in my presence." Near the Augarten, a small and very simple private house, surrounded by a garden, is still shewn, to which Joseph used daily to retire for the refreshment of solitude. It now belongs to the Archduke Charles.

you will one day make it that of Happiness,—you alone possess that power,—you alone influence and control the affections of my son."

Isabella clasped her hands mournfully in reply: Her tears were already falling.

On another occasion, as her chariot rolled beneath the magnificent avenues of the Prater, she was invited to visit the lodges of the deer; and entering a wooded glade, a sylvan concert rose on every side, like the voices of the wood-nymphs, to welcome her to the grove. The invocation was breathed in the very measures of Metastasio, and harmonized by the skill of Mozart; and the poet and the artist personally superintending the execution, it was worthy of the semi-divinities by whom it was performed,—the young Archduchesses habited as hamadryads. A rustic bower constructed of trunks of trees, and roofed with branches of fir, and garlands of exotics, now courted the queen of the *fête* to partake of a repast, —seemingly uniting every imaginable delicacy, but formed entirely of iced confectionary. Again the music floated in mysterious echoes around her,—but it was all in vain! The Princess

smiled upon their efforts, tasted their viands, listened to their delicate flatteries;—but the smile reached no further than her lips. Like the cates of their own deceptive board, all was coldness and delusion beneath.

It was to gratify a caprice expressed in one of her more cheerful moments, that the feathered prisoners of the Imperial aviary were let loose into the lofty tropical conservatory at Schönbrunn, then unique in Europe. To gratify her playful fancy, the loxia was admitted to disport amid its native bowers, and suspend its elegant plumage from the palmated leaves of the draconia; parroquets chattered amid the clustering pods of the creeping vanilla plant; the bleeding dove of Java murmured once more among the scarlet clusters of the ixora; and gaudy lories displayed their radiant wings among the bread-fruit trees.

At another time, Joseph * invited the nobles of the court circle to appear at one of his private balls, each in the costume of that country of

* A similar fête was given by the present Emperor, to the Allied Sovereigns during the Congress, of Vienna.

the Austrian dominions in which he held his estates:—Hungary, Bohemia, Croatia, Sclavonia, Transylvania, Moravia, Styria, Carinthia, Carniola, Lombardy, Flanders, Lorraine, Tuscany and Austria, sent forth representatives to the festival, in the persons of their proudest and loveliest. On the birthday of the Emperor, the chief cities of his realms were magnificently embodied in a similar manner; and on St. Theresa's *fête*, all the personages of Metastasio's operas were represented by the flower of the young nobility, under the counsels of the reverend Abbate in person.

Sometimes Ariosto's knights appeared to joust in the Imperial *manége*,—from whose columned galleries, as in the lists of chivalry,

> Ladies eyes
> Rained influence, and adjudged the prize.

Sometimes the Archdukes and their noble company of cavaliers affected an encounter with the Saracens; who were represented, as now in the *carnousel*, by wooden posts with Turkish heads, whose painted frowns of mimic grimness form their sole defence. But what are all such empty

pageants but the toys of full-grown children?—a *passetemps* to the *désœuvré*, but an importunate torment to the unhappy! Often would Joseph in the height of his exertions, or at the moment of the ballroom's gayest grouping, anxiously seek among the approving eyes of the spectators, those which formed the light of his solitude; but still and ever did he find them listless, unimpassioned,—or worse still, wrought by an effort of duty, into the constrained expression of interest!

Of all those who, surrounding the Archduchess Joseph, necessarily shared in these diversions, the Princess Lichtenstein, her favourite lady of the bedchamber, alone presumed to court her observations on the passnig scene, or to comment upon her singular indifference to the splendid gaieties of the court! The Princess was arrived at that period of life when, without presuming beyond those boundaries of etiquette so rigorously observed among the attendants of Maria Theresa, she could express something of a maternal solicitude for her Imperial mistress. Her brilliant position in the world placed her above the suspicion of seeking to exert undue influence

with selfish views; for her open, upright, and dignified character became the name she wore. To this amiable woman, whose attractions consisted less in the brilliancy of her conversational talents or the acuteness of her mind, than in warmth of heart, frankness of thought and speech, and an intuitive sense of all that is womanly and virtuous and honourable, confirmed by unostentatious piety, the Archduchess more fully conceded her confidence than to any member of the Imperial family.

As the period of her confinement approached, Princess Lichtenstein, herself a fond and exemplary mother, would frequently enlarge upon the happiness and interest of maternal occupations, and indulge in a thousand chimeras respecting the heir which she confidently predicted would be born to the German empire. But to all such observations Isabella would reply, "And what avails it to increase our ties unto a world we are about to forsake?—What is it to me that I shall be permitted for a time to indulge in the sacred joys and duties of a mother, since all must end so soon! I tell you Princess, before

the time shall arrive which you so often predict, before you are permitted to hail my husband as king of the Romans, I shall be lying cold, and silent, and lonely,—*there!*" * And she pointed to the church of the Capuchins, the burial-place of the Imperial family, which adjoins the palace.

"*Au reste, chere maman,*" continued the Princess more cheerfully, and leaning affectionately on her arm, "you need not embarrass yourself with these fruitless preparations; for believe me, you will never live to hold a son of mine upon your knee. If indeed I should survive to be blest with a living child, you must content yourselves with a tiny Archduchess."

This part of her Highness's prediction was soon and happily accomplished by the birth of a daughter, who was named Theresa, after the Empress; and the intense affection manifested by the young mother towards this blossom of a desart heart, induced all who were interested in her welfare to anticipate the happiest results. But notwithstanding the increasing pleasure

* The words used by the Archduchess.

which the Archduchess appeared to derive from her newly-awakened maternal tenderness,—notwithstanding the activity with which her lively mind busied itself in the acquirement of new accomplishments, and in their adaptation to the amusement of her husband, whom she alone possessed the power of interesting in conversation, or attracting towards new pursuits, Isabella still retained that settled character of gloomy mournfulness which no endeavours on the part of those by whom she was surrounded could ever entirely overcome. Enlarged experience of the world taught her to render it as little irksome to her husband, and as little oppressive to her domestic circle as possible; but the feeling of depression did not the less exist within the secret recesses of her heart. She would frequently dismiss her attendants, and remain for hours absorbed in solitary meditation; or, seated within the favourite temple of her garden, she would seem to watch the flowing waves of the Danube, as though the minutes of her existence were only worthy, like them, to pass onwards, undistinguishing and undistinguished, towards the mighty ocean of oblivion.

Even the political measures taken by the Austrian court to secure her husband's succession as king of the Romans, appeared to interest her mind only in as far as they were important to himself; and it was in vain that the Archduchesses, her sisters, attempted to awaken her sex's foibles of vanity and ambition in her heart, by detailing the preparations in progress for Joseph's approaching coronation at Frankfort.

"Have I not already assured you," she would reply, "that instead of ermine and purple, I shall be girded in a shroud? My sisters! assure yourselves that I shall not live to be queen of the Romans!"

Even in the presence of the Empress, whom she regarded with the most respectful and filial deference, Isabella was far from concealing the tenor of her feelings and presentiments; and it is remarkable that by her Imperial Majesty alone, the opinions of the Archduchess were never combated by ridicule, or treated with levity. In fact, the mind of Maria Theresa herself was already broken by age, and premature exertion; and the eminent intellectual endowments which

in her early life had commanded the admiration of Europe, were now enfeebled by the thraldom of narrow prejudices, and a bigotry that partook somewhat largely of the national weakness of her people. During her long reign, the Austrians were more attached to superstitious observances than any nation in Europe; and through a weakness, incredible in a civilized age, the doctrine of familiar spirits was not only prevalent in Vienna, but many of the most distinguished men of the day had devoted their valuable time and fortunes to the pursuit of the philosopher's stone, and the elixir of life.

The Emperor himself had expended enormous sums in such speculations. For some time he was engaged in an attempt to dissolve small diamonds, in order, by an alchemical process, to re-crystallize them into one large mass; and the Imperial government held out warm encouragement to individuals, to devote themselves to the transmutation of metals, by affording funds to facilitate these chimerical researches. Nor is it wonderful that the adept and the necromancer should have been tolerated in a city where the

memory of Paracelsus was still venerated as that of the first of philosophers.

Among the most credulous of the dupes to whom the out-breaking light of philosophy assumed in the obscurity of a dark age the semblance of a miracle, was the great Maria Theresa herself. The supernatural had an engrossing charm in her eyes; which were blinded alike by ignorance, and by the arts of the monkish crew that surrounded her retirement from the cares of state. It was evident that her Imperial Majesty entertained no doubt of the full accomplishment of the Archduchess's prediction; for she was secretly persuaded that her daughter-in-law had received some supernatural revelation on the subject of her future destinies; and she reverenced her the more, as one distinguished by a heavenly interposition, and by inter-communication with the unseen world.

There were however two members of the Imperial family not only enlightened beyond the contamination of these absurdities, but grieved to behold the minds they loved and reverenced, a prey to such corroding superstitious subjection;

—these were the Archduke Joseph, and his sister Maria Christina, already the wife of that Albert of Saxe Teschen, who has since invoked the genius of Canova to immortalize their affection.* Christina loved her Italian sister with a most enthusiastic fondness. She had been the first to suggest the diversions and courtly pleasures by which she had ardently trusted to dissipate her melancholy; and she was not, even now, contented like the rest to abandon her to the despondency of a misgoverned mind.

"Why," she would say to the Archduke, "why do you encourage our dear Isabella to pass her life away in the mere formal observances of our faith? Why permit her to accompany the Empress in her frequent and prolonged visits to the vaults of the Capuchin convent? My brother will scarcely deny that our duties towards our living kindred are paramount to any respect we owe to the mouldering bones of our ancestors;

* The exquisite monument of the Archduchess Christina, now one of the chief ornaments of Vienna, is known to have been originally designed by Canova for the Venetian States, as a tribute to the memory of Titian. The simple, but striking inscription is wholly its own:—"*Uxori optimæ Albertus.*"

and how, I beseech you, do my mother and sisters advantage themselves or their family, or further their eternal welfare, by the days they waste away in that chilly cavern of death?"

"Isabella has so few enjoyments, so few caprices," replied Joseph, "that I know not how to deny her an innocent indulgence. My mother is pleased by her sympathy—a sympathy that you or I find it impossible to bestow; and the peculiar frame of the Infanta's mind derives consolation from this strange familiarity with the aspect of death. Do not let us be niggard of pleasures which we cannot share."

"Nay—but surely we might attempt to moderate a taste so little accordant with reason, or indeed with the happiness of its possessor."

"No!" replied the Archduke after a moment's deliberation, "I have made it the principle of my wedded life to oppose no wish, no thought, no action of my Isabella's; for all are innocent in themselves, and few,—very few,—distasteful to my feelings. It would have been the glory of my existence to have obtained at her hands a reciprocation of that fond, that passionate, that

exclusive attachment, with which, from the first day of our marriage until now, I have still regarded her; but this I have long recognized as impossible; owing to natural coldness, or to some strong pre-occupation of feeling on her part. Believe not, Christina, that I allude, as many have suspected, to some previous attachment, to some Italian lover; if such were the case, she had not still retained that empire over my heart and mind which she holds with undivided power. No! my respect for her and for myself are equally untarnished by my warm, warm tenderness for Isabella."

He paused for a moment, oppressed by his own emotion.

"My dear brother," interrupted Christina, "I little intended to distress you by this discussion."

"Nay!" replied Joseph, "you have sought my confidence on a delicate subject; and you must receive it perfect and entire. You have been surprised,—for I am not so blind as I appear, to all that is passing around me,—that loving so distractedly as I do my lovely but perverse wife,—I have never either penetrated her

mysterious sorrow, nor compelled her to adopt habits more consonant with my taste; or, perhaps, an hypocrisy of happiness which might deceive the court and the world as to our relative feelings. Would you know the secret of this, Christina? Would you know why your brother, whose arbitrary spirit you have so often upbraided, appears in the present instance so tame, so enduring? Would you know by what strange enchantment his mind appears thus bereft of its energies? By *love*, my dearest sister, by a strong, a fervent and disinterested attachment! Love hath taught my restless spirit patience, — my despotic mind deference to the will of another; and Isabella of Parma, young, and timid, and gentle, and unobtrusive as she is, sways me with a far more resolute hand than I shall ever wield withal the rod of empire."

Christina smiled.

"You deride my weakness;—yet even against the mighty weapon of ridicule I am clad in an armour of proof. I have taken my resolution, sister; I have determined, in this instance, to resign all selfish feelings, and to act only

as may assure the happiness of my wife and children."

At this frank and generous declaration, the smiles of the Archduchess ceased. She was touched by the manly yet feeling tone of her brother.

"But you, my dear sister," resumed the Archduke, "whose intercourse with Isabella is restrained by no such delicacy, by no such embarrassments,—*you* surely might seek her confidence, might beguile her from the austerity of her devotion, from the cheerless reserve of her heart. Between woman and woman confidence is more prompt, more natural, more unqualified by selfish views; an existing sympathy of motives and actions, of frailties and inclinations, renders confession less alarming and less painful. I do not ask you to love Isabella, I am persuaded that she is truly and justly dear to your bosom. Still less do I ask you to betray her; or to ingratiate yourself into her secrets in order to deposit them with her husband. But I *do* ask you,—I do beseech you as *her* friend, to ascertain the origin of her depression of mind, and to

leave no labour undone, no exertion spared to restore her to herself and to happiness. Nay! my dear sister,— come to me, having so mastered her secret, tell me but by what sacrifice I can restore her peace of mind,—tell me that I must resign her,—renounce for ever the hope of her affection,—and I will implicitly follow your counsels. Tell me Christina, that your friend would be cheerful and happy and pleased with life if secure of my absence, and by the Heaven that hears me! I will never look upon her face again."

The Archduchess was too deeply aware of the intensity of her brother's attachment for his wife, not to appreciate, to the fullest extent, the value of his generosity. "Calm yourself," she replied, "Restrain this impetuosity of feeling. Be assured,—as I am,—that whatever may cause the gloomy reserve of the Infanta, you, and you alone are master of her transient impulses of happiness. I am persuaded that you are the sole and dearest object of all her thoughts; and although I possess not the shadow of a clue to her secret, I would peril my existence that it is blameless."

The countenance of Joseph was flushed with pleasure at the sound of declarations so cheering, from a sister whose head and heart and sex, equally qualified her to judge with discrimination the character and conduct of his beloved Isabella. Christina hastened to offer renewed assurances of sympathy and aid. "I will do all and more than you have required of me," she said. "We are about to leave Vienna; Isabella has half promised to visit me at Presburg; and during our solitary summer leisure, I trust I shall find occasion to execute your project. Before winter, the Archduchess will be again a mother; before winter I trust that our united efforts will have removed every shadow of sadness from her brow."

Cheered by these prognostications, the Archduke prepared himself with eager hope for the summer residence of the court at the Imperial palace of Laxenburg; where the Emperor and Empress, surrounded by their lovely daughters, were accustomed to forget for a season the monotonous routine of their existence at Vienna. Although *etiquette* was laid aside, they lost

nothing of their true dignity,—that of nobleness of heart, and mind, and action. They seemed indeed to forget the crown and arbitrary sceptre of Austria; but it was only to become the happiest, and most united, and most virtuous of its domestic families. The Archduchess Joseph and her infant were the leading objects of interest to the cheerful group; and Isabella herself appeared for a time rescued from her mournful presentiments, by the animated round of enjoyments devised for her welcome. Christina and her brother already exulted in her happier frame of mind; but Princess Lichtenstein, whose employment in her household admitted her with unchecked familiarity to the solitary hours of the young Princess, still regarded her with the deepest anxiety, and spoke of her condition with the fondest regret. Already she anticipated the most dreadful results from the despondency of her lovely charge.

CHAPTER III.

> Enfin je vais donc à la cour!
> Des plaisirs la troupe charmante
> Doit habiter ce beau séjour;
> J'y serai l'objet chaque jour
> De la fête la plus brillante.
>
> BLANCHE ET VERMEILLE.

THE summer of the year 1763 was one of those rare holidays accorded in the course of a century by the caprice of nature, in order to renew the tarnished credit of pastoral poets, and to invite the *frondeurs* of her reign into unconstrained familiarity with her loveliness; a season when the sky becomes our roof, and the turf our floor, and we seek refuge in the woodlands from the oppression of a dwelling made with hands.

The climate of Austria is one of strong transitions. The winter of Vienna is rude and inclement, and during three months of the year,

sledges supersede the use of wheel carriages; but its summer is almost Italian. There are seasons when the *Helenathal* of Baden might vie in exuberance of foliage and cloudlessness of sky, with the more celebrated valleys of the "sweet south,"—with Tempe or Vall'ombrosa; there are seasons when the Danube heaves his mighty burthen of waters through banks of woven oak, and amid plains of flowery verdure, more gracious and more smiling than those of Arno or the Durance.

Isabella had sometimes playfully complained of the chillness of the Austrian sunshine; but when June scattered her roses over the gardens of Laxenburg, she was compelled to acknowledge that those of her own villa at Colorno were outrivalled; and that not the orange blossoms of Italy could hang more richly upon the fragrant air, than those of the Imperial *bosquets*. The Princesses evinced their intense enjoyment of the weather and of the exquisite scenery to which it imparted an air of enchantment, by living almost entirely under the canopy of the skies. They were at that period anxiously occupied by the

progress of the *Ritter-schloss*, the mimic castle of chivalry which decorates the park of Laxenburg; forming a monument of bad taste that seldom fails to excite the sneers of the tourist. But although its design may be regarded as scenic and puerile, its rival wonder, the Temple of Night at Schönau, has been admiringly described by Madame de Stäel, and is generally regarded as a *chef d'œuvre* of the decorative art; and if the much reviled *Ritter-schloss* fail in its competition with its castles of feudal pride, the cares of its construction and arrangement afforded at least a blameless excitement to the happy family of Maria Theresa during their summer solitude.

It appears resolved by the general consent of modern times, that monarchs alone shall be denied the indulgence of realizing similar fancies; and that even their private revenues shall be expended according to the strictest interpretation of the arbitrary canons of criticism. Yet wherefore withhold such slight and harmless recreations as may in some measure compensate the loss of the sweeter sympathies of existence,—of

the unrestrained joyousness of private life?—and who would endure the loneliness of a throne, if the toys and baubles which beguile its dulness, are to be snatched away? "*Heureux le peuple,*" says the adage, "*dont l'histoire est ennuyeuse!*" "*Heureux le peuple,*" might be also said, "*dont le souverain occupe ses loisirs de pareils hochets!*"

Let those who gaze with the scornful coldness of a callous heart upon the castle of chivalry, imagine the animated interest with which the young and lovely Archduchesses who had designed its groined roofs and bannered galleries, its "storied windows richly dight," its gloomy armouries and warden tower, and dwarf with his enchanted horn,—inspected its slow completion:—the ardour with which they explored the hoards of the Imperial treasury for the toys of the olden time,—for jewelled chalice and fretted carcanet,—for the broidered hawking-glove which Hungary was accustomed to fill with ducats, for her ancient queens,—for missals which Cranach and Durer had illuminated for their use,—for the combs sparkling with opals that had graced their tiring chamber,—and all those thousand nameless

trinkets of coral and filigree, tourmaline and agate, which equally form the glory of the ancient *châtelaine*, and of the modern antiquary.

Maria Christina, who was an artist of no mean excellence, and Isabella who was gifted with the elegance and refinement of her native country, were indefatigable in tracing and designing the carved fretwork of the Gothic masonry, and the antique furniture which was to grace the gloomy chambers of the tower; and when the brilliancy of the summer sunshine imprisoned them within the shelter of *jalousies* and marble walls, they would sit together sketching, and comparing, and correcting their plans for the *château des Caprices*, while the Archduke, with a new volume of Marmontel in his hand, reproached their volubility; or the Princess Lichtenstein intruded the playful infancy of the little Theresa upon their busy occupation.

If Isabella derived less pleasure from the task than the Empress and her court circle, if she proved less ardently that love of excitation which prompted them

> to create, and in creating live
> A being more intense,

she had her own season of enjoyment and her own allotted Eden at Laxenburg. There was a terrace overlooking its "pleasance," which might alone suffice to vindicate the fallen favour of the grand and stately in the art of landscape gardening. The spectacle afforded by many of the royal residences of Germany which a depraved taste for what are perversely called English gardens, and "the natural," has surrounded with serpentine walks, mean shrubberies, hermitages, artificial rocks, rustic bridges, and meandering canals bordered by weeping willows, might indeed convince the most hardened sceptic of the absurdity of adapting the diminutive graces and *concetti* of a citizen's villa, to palaces recalling the splendours of Versailles. But the Imperial gardens afford a happy union of either style, and the noble terrace to which Christina and Isabella were wont to repair in the stillness of the summer twilight, in order to enjoy the tranquillity of the skies, and a happy and undisturbed confidence of thought and feeling, was indeed worthy to adorn a palace of the modern Cæsars.

The profusion of statues and vases ranged

along its marble parapet, tended to deceive the eye as to its glorious extent; yet still the perspective was singularly striking. Clustering pomegranate blossoms of dazzling brilliancy overhung the pale marble;—many a trim orange tree, white with its bridal flowers, seemed to murmur in the basking sunshine, from the numberless bees that were secretly enriching themselves with its spoil;—and here and there at considerable intervals, some colossal vase, on which the sculptured nymphs twined their voluptuous dance with wreathing arms and uplifted cymbals, extended its gigantic bowl,—uncrowned with flowers like the rest,—as if to collect the sparkling dew as a propitiatory offering to the sylvan deity of the spot. The lofty marble stairs whose descent terminated the terrace at either end, were secured from intrusion during the nightly promenade of the Archduchesses. The air was loaded with perfumes from the adjacent gardens;—the smooth glossy gravel shone like a tessellated Mosaic;—and the eye wandered between those choicest forms of ancient idolatry that graced the balustrade, towards the tangled wilderness of

blossoming shrubs in the distance beneath. All was gracious, and courtly, and noble; seeking no paltry competition with unrivalled nature, but displaying a splendid example of the achievements of human art.

"This was the favourite haunt of our childhood," said Christina one evening when the Infanta appeared unusually dejected. "My mother and the Emperor were always summoned hither by the governess of the Imperial children, to witness our first locomotive attempts; and soon that happy interest will be renewed by a younger generation. Caroline's imps are already exerting their little limbs at Caserta, and though I am myself denied the joy of a surviving child, yet next summer, dear Isabella, I shall delight to see you guiding the footsteps of your little Theresa over this level ground."

"And that believe me you will never see. I repeat to you, Christina, that these happy evenings, these lonely walks are my last. The summer sun seems brilliant to you,—to the Empress,—to the whole court; but judge how fair its beams must appear in my eyes, which are so

soon to close upon its brightness. Look upon this enchanted scene, Christina; mark how it unites the highest trophies of mortal and immortal creation,—breathe its sweet air, my dear sister, inhale its perfumes into the very depths of your heart,—feast your eyes upon the variety and softened union of its countless hues; and then contrast them, as I do, with the darkness and the loathsomeness of the grave which awaits me."

"Hush! Isabella,—hush!" said the Princess of Saxe Teschen, shocked by her allusion. "To reject the abundant gifts of Heaven is ungrateful,—to court such wayward despondency, is selfish and perverse."

"Perverse if you will,—but not selfish," replied Isabella. "Oh! did I study my own enjoyment, my own inclinations, think you I would not tear this rooted curse from my bosom, abandon my troubled heart to the sweet affections which court its adoption, and live, and love, and smile as you do, Christina?—For myself, I tell you that the gloomy clouds of November will hover over my pall; and as to my child"—

"Nay!" interrupted the Archduchess, affecting

to ridicule her predictions, "if you must needs die yourself, do not carry the mortality through the family."

"*Vous voulez que je vous laisse mon jeune? Ah! ma foi,—non! vous ne la garderez tout au plus que six on septans.*"*

"I trust, then, dearest sister, that you will accede to my mother's desire, and permit my pencil to record the existence of a being whom you announce as so evanescent. When will you allow Theresa to sit to me for the promised portrait,—when will you commit your precious self into my hands? November is approaching!" added Christina with a significant smile.

The Archduchess Joseph withdrew her hands, and clasped them vehemently upon her bosom, as a deep shudder pervaded her whole frame. "You say true;—my time is indeed short!" She walked on a few paces alone, then suddenly returning, "Sister!" said she, "you are right. These portraits, if indeed you wish to record

* These words were reported by an ear-witness, to Wraxall, who visited Vienna three years after the prediction had been accomplished by the death of both mother and child at the stated periods.

among you the brief existence of beings who have been lent you for your sorrow, must be speedily completed. You are about to depart for Presburg,—you have sought my company,—accept it now; I will be the companion of your journey. It will prove a diversion to the Arch-duke, who is oppressed by the constant sight of my sorrow."

"I doubt, however, my brother's inclination to visit Hungary. Let us content ourselves with our own society; we will leave him to add his chamber and his whim, to the *château des caprices*; or, during your absence, he may visit Baden: the waters and the varying society of the baths will be a surer antidote to *ennui* than my poor castle of Presburg."

Christina was not mistaken in her conjectures; the Archduke, while he warmly applauded the project of Isabella, was eager to escape himself from a sojourn in Hungary. He secretly detested the character of the people; and might probably already meditate those plans of reform which still render him the *bête d'aversion* of the Magyari. He had profited by his election as king of the

Romans, to resign the government of Hungary into the hands of Prince Albert of Saxe Teschen, the husband of Maria Christina; and although the nation had testified its loyal attachment to the children of its queen, by the erection of a noble palace at Buda, as a residence for the Palatine, yet the Archduke was at little pains to conceal his contempt for their barbarian ignorance, and vain-glorious pride. He considered the enslaved condition of the peasantry with the deepest commiseration; and regarded with jealousy the unyielding supremacy of the Magnats, without reflecting how far their rights might antedate the rule of his ancestors. He forgot, or wished not to remember, that Maria Theresa herself had, in her early days of adversity, not only confirmed their ancient constitution by accepting the coronation oath of Andreas II, but in gratitude for their faithful adherence to her blighted fortunes had extended their dangerous privileges, and created a new nobility to strengthen their might. He resolved that his first exercise of the Imperial power, should be to level the rank growth of aristocratic enactments which subdued

the energies of the land, and impoverished its resources; Europe had not then learned by a terrible example, the difficulty of separating from the sound members, those decayed branches and supernumerary trunks which a prudent foresight would devote to the axe of the woodman.

Joseph was indeed the arbitrary apostle of liberty,—the despot of reform,—the tyrant of the liberals. He decreed that a nation should be set free, which fondly hugged its chains. Without pausing to inquire, like our own Elizabeth touching the petitioning Evangelists,—"whether those prisoners *wished* to be released," he determined to impose freedom on his subjects at the point of the bayonet. He sent a mighty army to perish in the marshes of Croatia; and restrained with a fearless hand, the privileges of the discontented nobility. The condition of Hungary, at that eventful period, has been compared with that of England during the struggles between John and his barons; but the British King was not the champion of an oppressed peasantry; and the besotted people of Hungary, ungrateful for the exertions of the Emperor in their behalf,

resembled nothing but Sganarelle's wife, who insists upon being beaten, and resents the protecting interposition of a stranger.

Had Joseph the Second survived to direct and support the measures he had planned, all might have gone well. But when death terminated his active operations, Hungary was upon the eve of insurrection; and Leopold was compelled by an exhausted treasury and a rebellious people, to revoke all the unpopular edicts of his predecessor. Ere his brother was cold in the grave, at one fell swoop the labours of his life were demolished.

The political designs of the Archduke are said to have dated from his earliest years of manhood; and from the period of his marriage he avoided all communication with the Hungarians, save those who were neutralized by residence at the Austrian court. In vain the Infanta besought him to accompany her in this her first visit to Presburg. "Do not," he replied, "do not, I implore you, require me to visit Hungary The sight of her lovely face, deformed and degraded as its features are by the mastery of evil passions, is revolting to my feelings. No! I cannot visit the castle of Presburg."

Was the repugnance of the Archduke urged by the remembrance that his own helpless infancy had been harboured from his mother's faithless subjects in that very castle, by those very Magnats who now moved his disgust? Did he apprehend that the stones of that celebrated hall,* in which the young and lovely Theresa had committed her destitute babe to the "ancient fidelity of the famous Hungarian States," would prate of his ingratitude? Did he fear that the echoing clash of those loyal sabres which had leaped from their scabbards to attest the unanimous cry, "Our lives and our blood for your Majesty!" would enervate his firm resolve to unsheath against them the weapon of an enemy, and to suborn the land by an inundation of "*pellegrine spade?*"

The purposed visit of the Archduchess was deferred by several unforeseen occurrences; by the indisposition of the young Theresa, and by a series of *fêtes* given by the Emperor for the

* This hall is now in ruins. It forms part of the Seminarium, which was accidentally burnt during Napoleon's siege of Presburg. Several modern travellers have enthusiastically apostrophized the present chamber of the Diet, believing it to be the scene of Maria Theresa's celebrated harangue.

diversion of his favourite, the Princess Auersperg. Early however in the month of October, Isabella travelling as the Gräfinn Leutsnau, and attended only by the Princess Lichtenstein, and the household of the young Archduchess, arrived at Presburg; where she was welcomed with friendly affection by Maria Christina and Prince Albert, the Governess and Palatine of Hungary.

CHAPTER IV.

> And must I weep my youth away
> In these forebodings? must I feel
> Death's icy footsteps day by day
> Upon my shuddering bosom steal?
>
> VANE.

THE banks and fringed uplands which surround Presburg were already bright with a thousand golden hues; and the vineyards whence the fruit had been recently stript for the wine-press, were tinged with the earliest hectic of autumnal decay. The rivers began to roll with a more impetuous current, the clear sparkling air sharpened the outlines of the distant hills, and the mighty plain of the Danube between Vienna and Presburg was alternately scorched by a sultry noontide, and chilled by the early frosts of a darker season.

The castle, which now presents a mass of ruins

whose stately outline alone recalls its pristine glory, was then a splendid palace, well-ordered, and gracefully decorated. Its local advantages are perhaps unrivalled; our own Richmond offers but a feeble miniature of the union of woods and waters among which the citadel of Presburg uplifts its crest. The Danube with its island groves, the vast plains interspersed with princely *châteaux* "bosomed high 'mid tufted trees," the vineyards that clothe with their rich promise the adjoining slopes, the city with its towers seeming to rise gradually from the waters below, and to offer homage at every step, the intermingled gardens and rocks of the foreground,—and the maize-fields, and misty hills melting in the vast horizon, form a noble and varying landscape. The reflection of the illuminated atmosphere of Vienna which, at a distance of forty miles, is discernible at night from the summit of the hill, bears witness to its proud elevation; but it was during the sunny noon that Isabella leaned against an upper window of the tower, to contemplate the rich beauties of the surrounding scenery; and it was with difficulty that Maria

Christina tempted her from her post, and persuaded her to sacrifice a passing hour to the completion of that portrait which still survives to perpetuate their friendship.

The Archduchess found her sister listless and languid; and anxious for her own credit as an artist, she attempted to animate her pensive countenance by many interesting details touching the castle and its former inmates. At length she spoke of the Archduke's unhappy infancy, of his refuge within its walls, and of the loyalty of the hearts by which they were guarded; and more than all, she described with powerful interest the celebrated appeal of the young Queen, to which I have recently alluded. The lapse of three-and-twenty years had not sufficed to tarnish the romantic brilliancy of the event. History, that gravest and most authoritative of liars, had not laid a benumbing touch upon its *viva voce* animation; nor had party perverted its character, or aspersed its motives.

"She came hither," said the Archduchess, "harassed by faction, driven from her hereditary dominions, deserted by her allies; a young

mother,—about to give birth to a second heir to her misfortunes; yet without a hope of retaining one city of her empire to shelter its helplessness. She was unsupported and timid; but it was the timidity of youth and not of mind; for although the Empress was then but of your own age, dear Isabella, and lovely and gentle as you are, yet was she strong in mental energy, and in dauntless reliance upon Heaven; even in her extremity of adversity she retained her self-command, and through that, her command over the minds of others. Nay! so prevailing was the interest created by her youth and beauty and moral courage, that a land of heretics, even distant England, was moved to lavish its treasures in support of her cause."*

"But what avails our compassion?" exclaimed Isabella, hastily dispersing the tears that were gathering in her eyes. "Look upon the after-position of her destinies; look upon the fame Maria Theresa has acquired among the nations of

* The English ladies, instigated by the Duchess of Marlborough, subscribed 100,000*l.* for the aid of the Queen of Hungary · the gift was, however, gratefully declined.

Europe,— look upon the name she will leave to after-ages!"

"On that it were premature to decide; since we are taught to judge of man's fortunes by his *end*. And 'tis an appalling thing,—even to the best of sovereigns,— that said judgment of posterity; 'tis an impartial tribunal, which levels monarchs with the rest of mankind; a consideration, Isabella, that more than reconciles me to the obscurity of my own lot in life. *Comparative* obscurity, perhaps I ought to say;—yet surely a daughter of Austria may, without vanity, hail it as a lucky chance that her head is doomed to wear no royal crown."

"Your destiny has been one of rare felicity for one of our degree," replied the Archduchess Joseph, mournfully. "You have been permitted to give your hand to the lover of your choice without abandoning your native home."

"And *you*, Isabella?" demanded Christina, smiling at the inference.

"And *I* am married with one whom I could wish to have been the object of my preference; but believe me when I declare to you, in perfect

honesty, that my heart has never beat with a quickened throb through the influence of mortal man."

"Nevertheless," observed Christina with some hesitation, "the world has not failed to attribute your depression of spirit to the disappointment of an early attachment."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Isabella, starting from her seat, it had not occurred to me that my conduct or character could bear such an interpretation. I had thought to live in those records of history which you seem to hold in such holy horror, but as a sullen Princess, feeble in mind and health, and unworthy of the greatness that had been thrust upon her."

"Undeceive yourself then, my dear sister. You are, and will be represented, as the victim of an unhappy passion, unless you retain me, or some other of the handmaidens of Rumour as your advocate."

"So much has been said and sung of the power of love," observed Isabella, musingly, "that we have at length brought ourselves to believe it the master-passion of human nature. It

is assuredly the most graceful and picturesque,—the most acceptable to the arts; but neither the most powerful, nor universal. Hatred and revenge, hope and fear, ambition and avarice, had they been equally hymned, or equally analysed, would afford us perhaps as many examples of the mightiness of their influence."

"No, no! I will not have you in the right, dear Isabella. Jove and his thunderbolts are approved to have quailed beneath the simple shafts of love; and I, for one, hold the true faith that hearts may be broken by his influence, and brows borne about amid the better joys of life, as desponding, as wretched as your own."

"Your judgment is so thoroughly a woman's, that I am half tempted to forgive its treason."

"But will you not, my 'sullen Princess of history,' enable me to judge you with more exactness? I have never intruded upon your confidence; but if earnest affection, and a sincere interest in your welfare, entitle me to claim a concession which you appear to have accorded to none beside, then, Isabella, am I indeed worthy to become better acquainted with the true nature of your feelings."

"My kindest sister!" said the Archduchess, turning towards her with deep tenderness, "it has been my misfortune that my mind has been suffered to brood unmolested over its mysterious treasury of sorrow. I have sometimes even thought that its mood of misery, like the troubled dream of the sleeper, might have been dispelled had I attempted to speak,—had I presumed to give vent to its secret wretchedness."

Maria Christina affected to ply her pencil with busy activity, that she might not intimidate by observation the unfolding confidence of her companion.

"You will not be curious?" resumed Isabella, "you will not affect a further interest in my destiny,—my fatal destiny?"

"Dearest sister! I only fear to surprise your confidence,—to tempt you to avowals which you may repent at some calmer moment."

"Nay! look not so alarmed; I have nothing startling to unfold; nothing personal at least,—no guilt,—no error. I can only tell you that I am unhappy, and *that* you have known from our first hour of friendship."

"Rest yourself then on yonder couch, where the morning air plays so refreshingly. Rest yourself, dear Isabella; I will retouch some other painting. Tell me only that which it will be a relief to yourself to disclose; every detail of your life must interest my heart; but remember that I am your sister, not your confessor, and wish to extract nothing that will give you pain."

Isabella extended her weary frame beneath the open casement of the lofty tower. She bent her eyes alternately upon her affectionate auditress, and upon the wide expanse of landscape unfolded beneath; — and thus commenced her narration :—

"I have little occasion to begin my story, after the ordinary fashion of tale-tellers, by an enumeration of the *gestes et faits* of my ancestors. You know them for Bourbons, my dear Christina, both on my father's and my mother's side; and that name may supersede a host of details. But

although springing from a common source, the blood that flowed in their veins had acquired a strange diversity of character in its separation from the parent spring; that of my father, during a single generation of Spanish Royalty, had engendered gloom and superstition,—coldness and a taste for monastic seclusion;—while my mother, as an *enfant de France*, born and nurtured at Versailles, had retained a character of liveliness and elegance, and addiction to pleasure. To this union of contrasts, I am perhaps indebted for the mingled levity and melancholy of my unsettled disposition;—to its breach of the canons of the church,—since the consanguinity of my parents required a Papal dispensation,—I perhaps owe the evil destiny which has hovered over my devoted head.

"My grandfather, Louis XV., in bestowing his eldest and best loved daughter upon Don Philip, appeared even more depressed by the anticipation of her future life of seclusion, and the dreary monotony which awaited her at Parma, than by the loss of her affectionate devotion and animated society. He even conditioned with his

uncle, the king of Spain, who had negociated the alliance, that Elizabeth should be permitted to retain about her person, two of the ladies who were appointed to accompany her from the court of France; in order that she might not be at once denied the indulgence of the language and habits of her native country. The Comtesse de Loménie, accordingly, her *dame du palais,* and Mademoiselle de Vauquémont, the companion of her childhood, became the consolations of her loneliness in a foreign land; and by affording her the resource of constant companionship, relieved her from the necessity of conciliating the various members of her husband's court, or seeking the regard of her new subjects. Careless of Italy, indifferent to the claims of Parma, she continued to feel and act, and speak as a Frenchwoman. My poor mother,—I can only recollect her as a fond caressing mother, for I was too young to need a friend or an instructress,—passed her whole time in labouring to introduce the customs and amusements of Versailles into the noble circles of Parma, who cared but little for their adoption. Pleasures, like plants, have their

appointed soil and climate; nor will they flourish in an alien country. Her life was therefore a lost one, as far as regarded its influence on her subjects or the world; nor was it, I fear, contented or happy in itself.

"She was destined to an early death; and her parting prayers obtained the assurances of Madame de Loménie that she would never abandon her children. 'You have been my unfailing friend,' whispered my dying mother, 'my last link to a beloved, an unforgotten country. If you desert my Isabella, *who* will form her to be worthy of the name of Bourbon? If you break the chain which connects my sweet babes with my own home and kindred, how can I look for their happiness and well-being at the hands of Italians? Stay with them, Hermance! for my memory's sake renounce not this gloomy Parma!'

"Madame de Loménie found no courage to reject the entreaties of her dying mistress; and as my mother's indiscreet appeal was carefully reported by the treacherous Vauquémont, now by marriage with a nobleman of Parma, Contessa Mignardi, it served to dry the tears of her hus-

band's courtiers for her loss, and to indispose them in her daughter's favour; and thus you see my life began under an inauspicious influence. But however my popularity in the court or city might be affected by the Duchess's betrayal of national partiality, it secured my warm acceptance with Madame de Loménie. She truly loved my mother, and looked upon myself in the light of a sacred deposit; her tenderness indeed knew no bounds, and if indulgence and flattery be so truly pernicious as the wiser half of the world has decreed, I was soon possessed of a full right and title to become a prodigy of wickedness.

"The only countercheck to all this lavish favour, was of a character perhaps even more mischievous to the formation of my disposition, and to the ordering of my future prospects. Countess Mignardi, who shared with the indulgent Hermance the superintendence of my education, was a person in whom an instinctive malevolence of thought and speech effaced the charm of many valuable qualities, and talents of no mean character. She was pleasing in her address, and *piquante* in her general discourse;

and but for the undisguised malice which tinged her lips with bitterness, many would have sought and loved her. But she had been thwarted and disappointed in her hopes of forming a higher alliance in Italy; and although fairly matched with one of her own degree, yet the overthrow of her lofty ambition had changed the current of her blood to gall. Envious and wittily malicious, she seemed to reverse the instinct of the bee, and to gather only poison from the fairest flowers; but she had its venomed sting pointed indiscriminately at enemy or friend. Her compliments were a covert insult,—her endearments masked a blow,—like the concealed asp of Cleopatra, her forked venom darted from among tempting fruit;—and if she stabbed with a smiling face and jewelled bodkin, the wound festered not the less! Her own husband—her own kindred escaped not her insidious observations;—my poor mother, the companion and friend of her childhood, she could not persuade herself to spare; my father, whom she had vainly attempted, if the court whispers were worthy of credit, to inveigle into a *liaison*, was

now the object of her ironical deference; Madame de Loménie, who was good and simple, and incapable of self-defence, she boldly and insolently satirized; and even myself, my childish and motherless self, she never approached without a bitter compliment or flattering sarcasm.

"In noting the uncertain progress of my education, the Contessa Mignardi failed not to bewail in my hearing, with an affected *naïveté* of frankness, that its brilliant results should be wasted upon a court so obscure as that of Parma; and in betraying her discoveries of my ignorance, and petulance, and feebleness of mind to my father's court, she ceased not to lament that a princess so poorly gifted, and so miserably advised, should be destined to preside over its future destinies. Thus instigated, those of the grand Duke's courtiers who approached the nearest to his confidence, presumed to insinuate into the royal ear the incompetency of Madame de Loménie to preside over my education. But Don Philip, although reserved, possessed a secret fund of deep sensibility; he had been wounded indeed by my mother's alienation from his country

and its usages, but he reverenced her memory with the affection due to an unblemished wife; and in reply to the complaints whose accusation bore against my kind governess, 'Elizabeth loved her,' he would reply, as though he considered all argument and all refutation included in the spell of those few words. If it were a weakness on his part, it was a respectable and touching weakness; and even to this day, I never think upon my father, or feel inclined to resent his arbitrary disposal of my fate, but that the tone in which he used to pronounce '*My Elizabeth loved her!*' comes back to my heart, and pleads for a renewal of my tenderness and duty.

"Countess Mignardi's malice served therefore only to isolate my existence,—to aggravate the disinclination of the ladies of the court for seeking my society, and joining the circle of Madame de Loménie; while she in her turn, wounded and irritated by their neglect, taught herself to detest and despise Italy. From my childhood I was instructed to adopt the language and customs of Versailles, which have ever been more familiar to me than those of my native land;

my indignant preceptress breathed into my young ears no maxim so preremptory, no principle so assured as that France was the first of European countries,—a French princess the happiest and most distinguished of mortals,—and a French queen the unapproachable superlative of her sex.

"Don Philip was either too devoted to the memory of my mother, or too acutely sensible of the hollow nature of state alliances, to be tempted into a second marriage. In my dear brother he beheld the promise of a noble successor to his throne; in myself, had he been so minded, the assurance of tendance and tenderness in his declining years. He divided his time between the cares of his duchy and the pleasures of the chase; tormented one half the day by the importunities of his ministers, and rendering himself in his turn importunate to his courtiers during the remaining half. Can one in truth imagine a greater vexation to a studious or indolent man, than to be obliged season after season, day after day, to gallop off to the forest; harassed, and fatigued, and impoverished and disgusted by a sport in which he is necessitated to affect an exclusive

interest?—But every prince is blessed with some strong taste or tendency, in order to exercise the loyal patience of his court! Thus engrossed by his passion for the chase, my father although affectionately interested in the welfare of his children, had little opportunity to win upon their confidence. I have sometimes fancied that he found in the hurry of the hunting-field his sole retreat from the irksome punctilio of Spanish etiquette, maintained at his court; even in his interviews with myself, its utmost rigour remained unrelaxed. He seemed to consider, and how universal is the error!—that the affections of kin and consanguinity are purely instinctive, and require no cultivation; while to interest the hearts of strangers and retain our ordinary friendships, we must spare nor labour nor effort!

"It was not however with me alone that Don Philip was cold and reserved; he lent himself as sparingly to the pleasures of his court, as to the indulgence of his domestic affections. He was a disappointed, solitary-hearted man; but he tried to forget his cares in occupation,—he never strove to efface them by new diversions or new

affections. It was to Madame de Loménie, therefore, that I wholly dedicated the confidence and the warmth of my young heart; and urged by misjudging nationality, she sought to divide it solely with her own and my mother's native land. I had attained my seventeenth year, and still I was a mere child. The ill-acceptance of my *Dama soprantendente* at the court of Parma induced her to cling to the solitude of our narrow circle, and to exert her influence with my father to detain me yet awhile from the pleasures of the world. My health was feeble, and she represented my disposition as inclining me to strict seclusion. The habits of the Escurial hung about Don Philip;—he hailed my love of retirement as the first of feminine virtues: and I was permitted to perfect my education, undisturbed by any diversion more attractive than an annual gala, or *baisemains* of state, when a crowd of withered half-centuries, in an armour of brocade and whalebone,—*point d'Espagne* and *velours épinglé*, made their silent obeisance,—and retired! The earnest hope of my heart was to escape from a closer intimacy with their appalling formality, by retiring to a cloister!"

"Dearest Isabella!" interrupted the Archduchess, "could such an alternative present itself as a *hope!* Can you,—so gifted in mind, so deeply impressed with the importance of moral duties,—can you regard a monastic life as aught save an unnatural sacrifice?—unavailing to man, —unpleasing to God!"

"I was a child, dear sister! a sad and a secluded child; and as I had been instructed that nature was a desart save on the banks of the Seine, and society a blank, save in the *salons* of Versailles, I assured myself that some peaceful abbey—of which the simple sisterhood would be at once my friends and my submitted children,—would be a heavenly refuge against the illiterate inanity of the *coteries* of Parma. I loved only my flowers, my birds, my books,—my prayers, my God! and I felt that those might be equally cherished, and these far better served, in a retreat excluding the importunities of the vain and the interested. A considerable change was however soon effected in my views; but it was preceded by a metamorphosis still more remarkable in the person of the Contessa Mignardi.

"The Conte her husband's estate was known to be one of less than moderate extent; and it had always been surmised that her bitterness of heart and sarcastic levity of tongue, arose in a great measure, from the mortification of straitened means. But on a sudden the Contessa launched into habits of easy opulence, affected a cheerful gracious and gentle bearing; and we knew not whether most to admire her elegant splendours, or the amiable grace that attempered her smiles. Instead of avoiding as formerly, the cares of her appointment, or shrinking from the society of my good Hermance, she became assiduous in her court to myself, and cordially friendly in her demeanour towards Madame de Loménie; who, in her simple singleness of heart, fell readily into the snare. She began already to accuse herself of having noted impatiently the defects of the Contessina; already repented her injustice; and received all her *agaceries*, and became the dupe of all her *manigances*, with the easy credulity anticipated by her crafty rival. For myself, although totally ignorant of the end and aim of her manœuvres, I was convinced that so much address

was not superfluously exerted; nor could I put my trust in her sudden sympathy with the *maladie de pays* of my good Madame de Loménie, since she had chosen, by a voluntary marriage, to settle herself in Italy.

"One of the most unaccountable traits of Countess Mignardi's conversion was a detestation which, about this time, she began to exhibit towards every thing and every person connected with Germany. What was Austria to her, that she should unprovokedly indulge in the bitterest sarcasms upon its laws,—its climate,—customs,—inhabitants?—I have told you that she was original and piquant in her turn of conversation; and never did she exert her mischievous talent more divertingly than in sketching,—forgive me Christina, but you have required the whole truth,—in sketching the foibles of the Empress,—the astucious policy of her cabinet,—her weak superstition of mind,—her overweening attachment to a husband more than indifferent to her affections,—and a thousand other flippant impertinences. The Emperor himself she represented as an illiterate, half-witted, indigent Prince

of Lorraine, who had disposed of a shewy person to the highest bidder, 'and what,' she would add, 'can we expect of the heir of such an union? Even that which we find!—a flaxen-headed German boor,—whose excesses include *bier*, *bratwurst*, and *sauerkraut*;—and whose exploits'—but why should I relate her coarse irony? It availed only to move my girlish laughter, and to prompt Hermance to inquire the motive of her virulence against the Austrian court. But she silenced us both, and diverted our attention to other objects by introducing some topic of interest connected with Paris; thus confirming my former prejudice, and introducing a dangerous antipathy into my mind.

"Judge therefore, dearest Christina, with what horror, with what dismay I listened to a rumour, communicated to me by the weeping Hermance, that my hand was about to be sought in marriage for the Archduke Joseph! Oh! Christina,—dare I but relate to you one half the revolting accusations of degrading vices, and ignorant superstitions I had heard levelled at the Austrian character, you would not wonder at the agony of

my feelings on the bare supposition of such a sacrifice! Hermance mingled her tears with mine; but Countess Mignardi stimulated me to bold exertions in my own defence. I rushed to my father's feet, implored his mercy, besought him to let me live and die with him at Parma; I assured him of my obedience on all other subjects, but declared my rooted opinion that a cloister or a grave were preferable to a German throne.

"Don Philip listened to me with patience,—with indulgence. He was not eloquent in discourse, but he had a plain distinctness of speech that touched immediately upon his purpose. 'My daughter!' he replied, to my vehement expostulations, 'a long experience of the world has supplied my natural deficiencies of mind. It has taught me, Isabella, that princes least of all mankind are born for their own rule and governance. They are put in authority over a certain portion of human creatures, but that they may be peremptorily swayed by another. They belong to the world,—to their ancestry,—their posterity,—to any one but themselves; and the

trinkets of royalty,—sceptres and crowns,—are lent them but to withdraw their attention from their gilded slavery. Let the son of a kingly line display a martial spirit,—should his father's ministers decree that he will serve them more effectually in a cardinal's hat, than in a helmet,—he must submit!—Another is deeply imbued with the peaceful resignation of Christian piety;—he is sent to control navies, or to subjugate unoffending nations with fire and sword! Myself, who loved Spain, nay! who adored my native country,—have been affiliated in Parma, and devoted to the service of a nation that neither claims nor rewards my interest. But I was born of the blood-royal, and submission is consequently my first duty.'

"I started at the sound of a doctrine so new to my apprehension. 'And shall you, my Isabella,' continued my father, 'be alone exempted from the common lot, which proves that even monarchs are included in the mighty plan of justice and compensation? Shall you alone reject the rights of the world to your obedience? Alas! my petty sceptre will not suffice to main-

tain the independence of the child I love! Even the Archduke, whom you absurdly reprobate,—heir to the first of European empires,—cannot dispose of his destinies. He is a youth of studious and retiring habits, and so little inclined to endure domestic constraint, that his ardent and sole desire is to visit foreign countries, and to acquaint himself with the remoter districts of his own. Yet the wings of the young eaglet are clipped; and to rescue the empire of his mother from the dangers of another disputed succession, he is required to marry in his boyhood,—his tastes unconsulted and uncared for,—in order to extend the mighty line of Hapsburg.'

"I wept again, and with increased bitterness. 'You tremble, Isabella!' said Don Philip. 'Dry your tears, child; you have not been honoured by the selection of the great Maria Theresa; but I forewarn you that should so desirable an event occur, your consent and my own must hail it with grateful acceptance.'

"This was a terrible announcement! but Don Philip deigned to address me with so much moderation, and with such persuasive earnestness,

that I attempted to conceal my tears, and resolved to fix my hopes upon my numerous chances of escape from so honourable an election. One measure alone marked, on the part of my father, his disapprobation of the sentiments that had been instilled into my mind. He dismissed Countess Mignardi from my service, and exiled her from his court. Don Philip was probably acquainted with all that appeared to pass unobserved in our little circle; for his wrath expended itself in this single and singly-earned expulsion. Even had Hermance incurred his displeasure, I doubt not that the memory of his Elizabeth would have availed to secure her from its expression.

"Soon after our first confidential interview, I was hastily removed to the summer palace at Colorno. The small-pox broke out in the city, and rendered it an insecure residence; my father had already past the ordeal, and as my retinue, for better security from contagion, was considerably reduced, Madame de Loménie and myself anticipated a delicious *tête à tête* of many months duration. It was spring,—and even at a less

inviting season, I loved Colorno. I rejoiced in the deep seclusion of its scenery, in the deserted air of its untenanted galleries; I could read there, and sketch, and sing, and weave my garlands in unmolested industry,—and these were my favourite diversions; I could uplift my lonely thoughts in prayer, or indulge with childish caresses my tenderness for my second mother,—and this was my only happiness!—In the graver hours of our communing, I acknowledged to Madame de Loménie how earnestly my devout intercessions implored some mental foreshewing of my future destiny; how earnestly I prayed that my suspense might be terminated by some sign of Divine protection. Hermance warmly reproved my presumption;—alas! how little did she imagine that before I quitted Colorno my prayers would be terribly and fatally fulfilled;—that I should be permitted to peruse the book of fate only that my eyes might be blighted, and my heart withered by its awful characters!"

Isabella paused for a moment,—nor was she permitted to resume her narration. Princess Lichtenstein, who had passed the morning in an

excursion to Kittsee, the castle of her kinsman Prince Esterhazy, now entered the chamber, to announce the return of Prince Albert from the chase. The *causerie* of the friends was thus interrupted, and in the evening the resident nobility were admitted to the circle of the Archduchess, that they might offer their homage to their future queen. There was at present no possibility of gratifying the anxious interest of Maria Christina.

CHAPTER V.

Une jeune et belle Princesse
  Ne fait rien qu' avec dignité,
Le respect l'entoure sans cesse
  Pour tenir bien loin la gaité.
L'etiquette doit la conduire
  Car sans elle, point de grandeur!
Si la Princesse veut sourire,
  Il faut l'avis de la dame d'honneur.

FLORIAN.

THE impression made upon the Archduchess Joseph by the reception chamber of the castle of Presburg, caused a material change in the judgment she had formed at Vienna of the Hungarian *noblesse*. At the court of Austria she had distinguished them from the nobles of the empire, only as exhibiting richer evidences of pride and profusion; but in the capital of their native country, they boldly displayed their national characteristics.

There beats not in Europe so haughty a heart as that of an Hungarian! He is proud both of his nation and himself, and let him condescend as he will, he cannot disguise the supremacy which they maintain in his estimation; but if *hauteur* could sit becomingly on any human brow, it would be on that of a majestic, half-civilized, half-martial Magyar. This vain-gloriousness of character, which betrays itself in richness of costume and a pertinacious retention of ancient customs, imparts to the address of the magnats an air of defiance,—to their ladies, a sort of selfish dignity; but while in both it serves to repress the cordiality of strangers, it also tends to pique their curiosity, and excite their interest. They perceive that the magnats differ wholly from the inhabitants of England, France, and Germany; where the higher classes may be considered as united into one common *caste.*

But during the reign of Maria Theresa, the Hungarian nobility exhibited a far more distinct and peculiar class than in the present day. They had not resigned their hopes of forming once

more an independent monarchy; they cherished a strong sense of their claims upon the gratitude of their queen, and they studiously reserved themselves from all connexion with the less loyal houses of Germany. The noblest and most powerful among them were assiduous in their court to Maria Christina, as being the favourite daughter of their favourite sovereign; but their homage was vouchsafed as a concession; they bent the knee with an air of affability, and appeared to disdain even their own condescension.

The ladies of the court scrupulously retained the gala-dress of the reign of Matthias Corvinus; and their jewels, which, although heavy and ill-set were singularly splendid, were in a great measure drawn from their national resources. They were secretly reproached, it is true, by their rivals of the Archduchess's *suite* with want of ease and *enjouement*, and an admixture of French graces and refinements; but in the eyes of Isabella, their originality and Gothic magnificence was far more attractive than any imitation of a happier model.

"Are they not an exact restoration of the obsolete *belles* of the middle ages?" she whispered to Princess Lichtenstein. "I could fancy myself at the court of the Medici, or Can Grande! They are more regal than royalty itself, —*fieramente grandiose,—nobles absolument à l'outrance*— and despise us from the very summit of their self-sufficiency."

"Believe me," observed Christina, "they have many virtues, — very many sterling qualities. They consecrate their time wholly to the discharge of their domestic duties; and if our fashions and accomplishments have not yet crossed their frontier, our follies and vices are equally excluded. Forgetful of, or superior to their splendours of to-night, to-morrow they will be found sitting like the wives of the patriarchs among their handmaidens,—knitting and spinning and sewing. They speak of the Hungarian nobles who spend their revenues in Vienna, with the most lofty contempt; but they are not sociable among themselves, though profusely hospitable; and thus the *tracasseries* of female gossipping are unknown in Presburg. They

are intimately acquainted with the standard of their own dignities, and that of their neighbours; and being as scrupulous in yielding as in claiming place and precedence, I have no *frondeuses*—no jostling in my little court."

"Yonder group of *précieuses* in velvet robes stiff with embroidery, looks as if you had robbed the cathedral of some of its monumental effigies."

"If they are indeed *tant soit peu précieuses,* they have some little right to the exercise of so deadly a sin. Most of the Hungarian ladies are tolerable classical scholars, and all are capable of conversing in Latin as well as in several modern languages. They avoid but one; and that alas! is German,—detested among them as a badge of subjection."

"I wish they loved us better," observed Isabella turning away; "or I am much mistaken, those fierce glances and warlike mustachios will be heard of at Vienna within these twenty years."

The exquisite military band entertained by the Prince of Saxe Teschen now struck up; and the whole assemblage joining in a *polonaise,* the only dance truly becoming the dignity of a court,

Isabella escaped from the heated crowd; and finding her way unobserved to the chamber of her little daughter, she dismissed her attendants, and stationed herself by the couch of the young Archduchess. Drawing aside the silken curtains and bending over that holiest of nests, her infant's pillow, she marked by the moonlight the calm soft cheek of the slumbering babe; and contrasted it with the flushed brows, and glare and tumult she had quitted.

"And shall I presume to grieve," murmured Isabella, "that the will of Heaven should fix thee thus,—thus in thine innocence,—thus for ever! 'Tis said that the loved of God die young; and thou, mine own Theresa, will be among the early dead! Thou art destined to be a blighted bud,—my lovely child! no sin shall wither thy blameless heart;—pure as the Almighty lent thee to our love, he will claim thee again with a mighty hand:—a mighty, but a *merciful* hand, which wills not that thy spirit should expand on earth, unguarded by thy mother's tenderness. And why, oh! why should I dread the grave in which thou wilt so soon

slumber by my side? Even as I now lay down my weary head upon thy pillow, even so sweetly,—so composedly—shall our last rest unite us in the tomb!"

A gentle step interrupted Isabella's gloomy endearments; the Archduchess Christina lightly approached the couch. "They have departed," said she in a subdued voice. "My guests have left the castle; and I have sought and found you Isabella with a clue by which all mothers *should* be found when sought."

"How fair she is," whispered the Archduchess Joseph, pointing to her nestling. "She is more than half an Austrian, Christina; and I shall expect her countrywomen to cherish her very tenderly for me when I am gone to rest."

"Isabella!" exclaimed her sister, half reproachfully, but encircling her with a caressing arm, "I will not allow you to grieve me with these forebodings. It is sinful to forestal the judgments of God."

"Had I been permitted to terminate my recital this morning, you would have spared your reproof. But it is yet early, dearest sister! we

shall not be interrupted here; and if you permit me to conclude my melancholy relation, my heart will be in some measure relieved from its oppression."

Christina, warmly desirous that the effort should be past, followed the Archduchess Joseph into an open cabinet adjoining the alcove of the little Theresa; where, reclining in the glimmering moonlight, Isabella resumed her explanation.

"Methinks I had already taken you with me unto Colorno, sister,—Colorno is a lovely spot! but I have often described it in your hearing,—its ornate architecture,—its stately gardens,—its glassy river. Yes! it is a lovely spot.

"But fair as it is, and was,—and deeply as Madame de Loménie had always appeared to prize its beauties, my *governante* now for the first time in my life, indulged in prolonged absences from my side. Her health, she said, required more exercise than the delicacy of mine would permit me to share; and every day she departed, leaving me happy in the calmness of my solitude; alone—consoling thought—with Heaven! My

Hermance failed not however to recommend me to the redoubled vigilance of my ladies in waiting; and when she returned to my side, the joy of our re-union was so great that I always forgot to chide her delay. Some expression, some incautious word that fell from her lips, induced me to imagine that she had been engaged in an interview with the disgraced Mignardi. She had now always some intelligence from Paris to communicate; the French court appeared more, and more warmly than ever, to interest her attention; and upon one occasion she congratulated me that I had no further chance of being buried alive in Vienna, for a marriage she assured me was already on the *tapis* between the Archduke, and one of my aunts,—Madame Adelaide de France. Another time she hinted a hope that a Prince of the Bourbon blood would make his proposals for my hand acceptable to my father; but when I betrayed my anxiety by many an eager question, she saw cause to repent her frankness, and treated the whole as a chimera.

"I have told you that I loved solitude; but I

did not like to be debarred the happiness of Madame de Loménie's society;—neither would it have formed an obstacle to my solitude,—for I loved her as myself! I had no thought hidden from Hermance, and I candidly acknowledged my discontent at her repeated absence;—I implored her to permit me to share her rides, but again she peremptorily refused my request. Fortunately a visit from my dear father enabled me to obtain his consent to my desire; the following day, four milk-white mules with crimson-velvet trappings arrived for our use,—a gift from Don Philip. Full of the excitement of my childish triumph, I insisted upon accompanying Madame de Loménie that very day; she attempted indeed to excuse herself, but I was peremptory, under the sanction of my father's will.

"I shall never forget that first summer ramble through the forest! So seldom had I been thwarted in my inclinations, that to triumph over an obstacle was a rare and intoxicating pleasure. My mule too, the gentle, and beautiful animal prepared by my father for my use, seemed by its animation to share my pleasure, when my happy

laugh overpowered the tinkling bells that ornamented its bridle rein. Hermance led the way through a part of the forest I had never visited, and which was in fact untraversed by roads: she was still, in memory of her recent discomfiture, grave and *boudeuse;* but as I exultingly joined her, holding on my wrist the favourite merlin I had taken from my equerry's hand, she gazed upon my joyous radiant face, until its smiles became reflected in her own. Our way led us through an entangled grove of bright-leaved chestnuts, that shut out the sun-light; or admitted it only in quivering patches that here and there trembled on the moss, or threw a golden reflection upon the ancient trunks among which we wound our path.

"Sometimes we crossed a little brawling rivulet, that flew murmuring along, flinging aside the pebbles, as if discontented with the lonely obscurity of its allotted course; sometimes, a gravelly ravine,—which manifested that in a stormy season torrents of greater importance were destined to the same mischance. Here and there impervious masses of dark ilex confronted our way, and

obliged us to diverge into the green alleys cut for the use of the royal chace among the woods. At length in the very depths of the forest we approached a spot cleared of its larger trees, and only tufted with underwood; at the extremity of which, I discerned an embattled stone wall, surrounded by a moat. I insisted upon a nearer inspection, but Madame de Loménie assured me it would be labour lost. ''Tis but an ancient half-ruined manor,—a dismantled *castello*,' said she carelessly.

"'A ruin,' I exclaimed, 'a thing I have never seen, save upon canvas! Let us forward, and discover if aught may be discerned through yonder grating.'

"Madame de Loménie assured me that the moat was filled with reptiles and stagnant water, and that the exhalations might be dangerous; but I was not easily terrified;—I had already surmounted one difficulty that day, and I resolved upon a second attempt.

"'Do not persist, my Isabella, you give me pain,' suddenly exclaimed Hermance; and I

immediately turned the head of my mule towards home. A word of kindness disarmed my obstinacy;—had she called me princess or highness, I should have persevered.

"But judge of my amazement when, as I wandered listlessly on our return amid the thickets of bay and arbutus, I distinctly beheld Madame de Loménie, who was loitering at some little distance, take a billet from her bosom and deliver it to one of our equerries. The colour rose to my temples when I perceived him gallop off in the direction of the moated wall. 'Am I trifled with?' whispered my proud heart. 'Yonder is no ruined castle, and when time and tide permit, I will yet gratify my curiosity. *Le bon tems viendra!*'

"I soon however forgot my passing fancy, and my displeasure against Hermance. The spring-tide breezes, and the sweet odours and sweet sounds incorporated with their freshness, played fitfully around me, and shook the loosened tresses upon my cheek, as I pricked forward to outstrip the sober pace of my *governante;* nor were they lighter or more changeful than my

heart. I was gay in the sunshine, pensive in the shade; and the deer,—which we surprised at their evening feed, and which at our approach fled wildly over the fern, trampling the tufted beds of our Parma violets, now alive with flowers and fragrance,—were scarcely so sportive or so timid as myself.

" The next day, and the next, we renewed our rides; but Hermance took care that they should be directed along the banks of the river, or upon the Casalmaggiore route; and it was the very effort she made to appear forgetful of the forest, which continually recalled it to my mind. I affected however an indifference equal to her own; and one day as we issued from the columned gateway of Colorno, I turned as if unpremeditatedly, into the forbidden track,—' It is a sultry morning,' said I, carelessly, ' the turf and the chestnut shades will be delicious.' Hermance had no reasonable excuse to suggest; and we accordingly re-entered the tangled woodlands, and once more startled the ring-doves from their secluded nests.

" At length with leisurely negligence we

approached the memorable spot; when suddenly putting my mule to speed, I paused not until I reached the gateway of the moated house. But although my project succeeded to the utmost, I found in its accomplishment no reward for my wilfulness. The objects around me were little calculated to gratify my curiosity. I gazed and saw the long dilapidated façade of an extensive mansion, to which the closed windows imparted the same melancholy character we trace upon the countenances of the blind. Tall grass, and taller hemlock, waved throughout the spacious court-yard; but there was a narrow path trodden towards the portal, shewing that the desolate abode was not wholly tenantless.

"'*M'amie!*' I exclaimed to Madame de Loménie, who had now reached my side, while her mule pawing the ground, and attempting to dislodge the forest flies which penetrated his silken net, seemed as vexed and indignant as herself, '*M'amie!—mon cœur!* you are but too well acquainted with the inhabitants of this wretched dwelling;—tell me who was the hero of the billet?' Hermance remained angrily

silent. '*Cara—carissima! rispondi o mori!*' said I again, holding up my broidered rein with playful menaces. 'Look!—there is a *mozzo di stalla* issuing from the orchard-gate, who will betray the secret at my merest questioning; speak, or as I am a Christian Princess, I will summon him hither, however disappointed I may feel that neither dwarf nor magic horn guards in his room the enchanted gate.'

" 'The billet which so moved your Highness's interest,' replied Madame de Loménie haughtily, 'was addressed to a French family resident here,—friends of my early youth. I had trusted that an Infanta of Parma was superior to mere trifling girlish curiosity.'

" I was conscious and piqued. 'A French family!' I exclaimed. '*J'ai aujourd 'hui trop de bonheur!* I will ask their hospitality in my mother's name.'

" 'Your Serene Highness cannot surely be serious!'

" 'Serious as an Ursuline; and see! your friends have discovered your arrival, Hermance *ma chérissime*,—and are come to bid us welcome.'

"The consternation of Madame de Loménie was now *au comble.* We had been indeed discovered from the house; and a gentleman, middle-aged, and of a peculiarly distinguished air, now advanced to the gateway which was hastily opened by several domestics who followed his approach. I know not whether the movement which caused my entrance into the courtyard proceeded from myself or my *monture;* but I soon found myself pausing at the portal; with the stranger, on his bended knee, offering me the courtliest homage in the courtliest French, with the courtliest adulation I had ever heard or witnessed. Partly to aggravate the confusion and trepidation of my *governante,* and partly to trace the mystery to its source, I graciously consented to alight; expressing a desire to visit the gardens, and repose myself in the shade. Hermance saw me dismount, and finding remonstrance in vain, was forced to follow my example;—obliged to modify her displeasure, she stalked majestically by my side, as the stranger conducted us towards the disordered and untrimmed paths of the gardens.

" 'Has it ever occurred, Christina, to your painter's eye, that flowers spring nowhere so richly or so brightly as in some deserted and uncultivated garden? Free commoners of nature, they resist amid our trim parterres, the tyrannous hand which curtails them of their fair proportions; they will not blush at our bidding, — they will not follow at our guidance,—and repay our cares with the murmuring submission of slaves. But when we abandon them to their lawless loveliness, they burst into a perverse luxuriance of bloom, and scatter their prodigal clusters as if in mockery of our art. Yes! Colorno with its formal alleys, and garnished terraces, which but that morning I had esteemed as peerless, grew pale, and poor, and artificial, when compared with the abandoned garden of Castel-Avrelino! Its walls of mossy stone seemed to enclose and monopolize the sunshine for its use; but neither the maidenhair pendant from their crevices, nor the glossy houndstongue, whose bright verdure contrasted with their hoary gray, appeared less molested by the hand of culture than the entangled roses of every dye, which, like the

beauties of a festal crowd, disputed for pre-eminence among its labyrinths.

"The marble base of the sundial had gradually mouldered away, to the destruction of its perpendicular, and the discredit of its records. But what mattered its errors? since the prying scarlet honeysuckle, creeping up its sculptured column, alone approached to investigate its fidelity. The beds of basil and marjoram around, proclaimed that no wandering footstep had invaded their green carpet for years!

"Such was the wilderness of sweets through which I bent my way; enchanted with a scene such as I had neither witnessed nor imagined, but whose careless beauties far outpassed the orderly array still destined to precede the paths of princes. Desirous of giving occasion to Madame de Loménie to explain to her mysterious countryman, as best she might, the origin of my indiscreet intrusion, I flew onwards to a distant terrace, leaving them behind me, panting in the sunshine. It is the remembrance of that very terrace, Christina, which, by the association of contrast, has always so endeared to my heart the stately pride of Laxenburg.

"That of my desolate Italian castle was tessellated with black marble and *rosso antico;* but its balustrade had been of the purest Carrara, ere mellowed by the weather-stains of time. The sculptured gods of Laxenburg are proud and unyielding, as if incense were still offered upon their altars; but of those of Castel-Avrelino, some were hurled from their pedestals,—others were contemptuously mutilated,—and many were obscured by the exuberant growth of the shrubs, still blossoming beside them in their moss-grown vases. The orange-trees of your prosperous palace are shapely and exotic;—those of *my* terrace were guarded by long rude thorns of wildness, and had intruded the bloom of their unrestrained branches among the shafts of Diana's quiver, or the chords of Apollo's lyre. But more, far more than all recording the desolateness of the lonely place, was the tall withered stalk of an aloe-flower, that had sprung up amid its rigid palmy leaves, and bloomed and perished undiscovered. After the darkness of a century, its unavailing light had dawned upon the weary wastes of a solitude!

"As my unwonted step approached a bower of rose-acacias, matted with pendent blossoms, which terminated the terrace, a twittering flight of goldfinches started from its boughs, and the rapid lizards glided like shadows into the crevices of the marble pavement; and as I crept stealthily along to invade their territories unobserved, I heard the murmur of voices from an alley sheltered beneath the terrace. 'I beseech you, madam, to compose yourself,' said the stranger to Hermance, 'the circumstance you thus deplore, is capable of being directed to the most flattering results. The Infanta flies into our arms,—what more do you require?'

"'That my precious Isabella's incautious candour may not endanger our ultimate success. One word to Don Philip touching our secret negociations,—and farewell France!'—

"'*Chère Comtesse, ma toute aimable amie! calmez vous!*' replied her friend. '*Votre bonheur,—celui de votre auguste élève—réclame tous mes soins. Jugez si je songe à abandonner des projets conçus depuis si longtems;—jugez si je me sens disposé à renoncer au doux espoir de vous rendre*

à cette patrie si chère à toutes deux. Non! Madame; désormais ne craignez rien;—abandonnez vous à une destinée jusqu'ici propice à nos vœux!'

"If my curiosity had been grievously excited by the mere wall of the castle, judge whether this unintelligible harangue tended to decrease my interest and my astonishment. I heard no more in explanation, for Madame de Loménie at that moment reaching the terrace, respectfully presented her countryman to my [illegible]ce as the Comte du Fayel,—an officer in the service of my illustrious grandfather; and the courtly stranger, resuming all his ingratiating suavity of address, began to express his regret that the dwelling I deigned to honour with my presence, should be so unworthy the distinction. 'I have not presumed,' said he, 'to seek a fairer abode during my stay in Parma; since I am come hither but in affection for a beloved kinswoman who has been so unfortunate as to provoke the displeasure of Don Philip. I will neither venture to name my relation in your Highness's presence, nor to lament her disgrace; since it has not debarred me of the long-coveted happiness of offering my

homage to her august charge.—I shall leave Italy contentedly, since I am enabled to assure the noble Princes of Bourbon, that their lilies flourish in its soil as brightly as in their native earth.'

"In looking back upon the powerful impression made on my mind by my first interview with Monsieur du Fayel, I find it difficult to explain the nature of my delusion. Was it his adroit flattery,—his *usage du grand monde*, or his perfection of diction in a language known to me, in its purest elegance, only from the lips of my mother?—Madame de Loménie had long since involuntarily Italianized her phrase;—but my mysterious acquaintance still wore on his lips the latest polish of Versailles.

"'Do you agree with me, dearest sister, in estimating Parisian French, as the language *par excellence* of courtly adulation? My father's Spanish intonation always breathed to my heart the spirit of prayer; my native tongue is probably the most copious in expressing the intensity of the passion "*che nell' anima si sente;*" your own, Christina, which so roughly grapples

with its subject, is assuredly that of philosophical discussion; but French is your only idiom for polite dissimulation; — it is the very voice of courtesy,—the measured cadence of falsehood, the breath of diplomatic deception, the language of promise, and policy, insinuation and intrigue! The Comte du Fayel was a mighty master of its elegant pliabilities; and when I quitted Castel-Avrelino, not only had he fully succeeded in reconciling me to myself and to Madame de Loménie, but had imparted a character to my caprice which at once affixed a confidential seal upon my visit.

"Once settled at Colorno, however, and uninfluenced by his ready tact of speech, I began to regard the subject with bitter uneasiness. I had discovered myself to be the object of a plot, — to be a tool in the hands of some unknown agent. I had reason to imagine that he meant me well; but when I remembered his connexion with the artful Mignardi, my mistrust overcame the charm of his address. A cloud too had insinuated itself between Hermance and my confidence. She had acted towards me with dupli-

city, and thus diminished my affection. My mind was in a confusion of surprise, and regret, and trepidation; I trusted to time to develope the mystery.

"Meantime, Madame de Loménie appeared as much distressed and embarrassed as myself. She could scarcely compose herself to join in our accustomed studies; music moved her to tears, and her trembling hand could no longer guide the pencil;—the vessel had lost its compass, and was wandering pilotless amid perilous breakers. At times she would gaze upon my face, while the tears stole down her own; at others she would pace along the apartment, regardless of her ordinary punctilio of etiquette; and at all hours, and all seasons, she was overwhelmed with the arrival or despatch of letters, which only served to aggravate her visible agitation. One morning, after the receipt and anxious perusal of one of these inexplicable billets, Hermance appeared more than usually oppressed. It was the mid summer; and a sultry season, which had already parched the olive grounds and vineyards with drought. The day had dawned

heavily, and the air seemed darkened with coming storms; when Madame de Loménie, either unobservant or careless of its aspect, suddenly proposed an excursion into the forest. It was the first time she had alluded to the subject since our visit to Castel-Avrelino, nor had she even named Monsieur du Fayel; but breaking through her reserve, she informed me that he was on the eve of his return to Versailles, and awaited only her commissions and adieu. She proposed indeed to make the attempt alone; but she spoke so encouragingly of the state of the weather, and so pointedly predicted that no rain would fall till after the meridian, that I offered to accompany her, and found the proposal gratefully accepted.

"Experience proved my *governante* to be an indifferent augur. Long before we reached the *castello*, single drops of heavy rain began to plash upon the chestnut leaves; and the air was still and breathless, save when a distant deepening murmur foretold the approach of the storm. The intervals grew shorter, the peals more distinct; and the pricking ears of the mules proclaimed

their instinct of the coming danger; we hastened and hastened,—but the speed of the tempest outstripped our own; and now each livid flash that glared through the boughs was followed by an immediate crash,—a prolonged roar—as though some mighty monster had been wounded by the forked arrow of the heavens. Just as we reached the gateway of Castel-Avrelino, one vivid sheet of fire seemed to fall upon a lofty pine that overhangs the wall. It is still there! scathed and leafless; but I marked not *then* its destiny,—I was borne in the arms of the Comte du Fayel, senseless and motionless into his desolate, his fatal mansion!"

CHAPTER VI.

> I see a hand thou canst not see
> Which beckons me away,—
> I hear a voice thou canst not hear
> Which says I must not stay.
>
> GAY.

"I CANNOT but believe, Christina, although I know not that the idea presented itself at that period to my mind, that I had been expected at Castel-Avrelino,—that the alternative of finding refuge from the storm in the dwelling of the Comte du Fayel had suggested Madame de Loménie's ill-timed excursion. She might wish to enable her friend, who, circumstanced as he was, presumed not to seek a presentation at Colorno, to convey to my mother's family a more particular account of my character and demeanour;—for what other motive could urge so bold a measure?

"By this supposition only can I account for the profuse magnificence of the chamber, and the elegance of the repast which courted my attention as soon as the pauses of the storm restored me in some measure to my self-possession. The brilliant refinement that attended the most minute details of both, was of an order unknown in Italy; and served to impress me with a still deeper admiration of Parisian taste. In vain I claimed the notice of Hermance for the assemblage of costly novelties which so attracted my childish fancy; still overcome by terror and emotion, she could not banish from her recollection the perils of our awful ride; nor could the courtly host who presided over this strange admixture of splendour and ruin, of desolation and magnificence, restore her to composure by his respectful exhortations. Yet the Comte du Fayel, of all men whom I have ever seen, possessed most powerfully that domestic eloquence, that ingratiating and persuasive bearing which fascinates our better judgment. My dear father is generally esteemed one of the most dignified and graceful of our Italian Princes; but the

Count, who nearly approached his age, far excelled Don Philip in his mode of address; and in the present instance he played the part of the humble and devoted host, surprised in his destitute retreat, with a cordiality of deferential hospitality emulating that of Federigo and his Falcon.

"Having conducted me to an apartment of which the draperies of fawn-coloured velvet, and the cornices of matted gold, appeared as little in accordance with the mouldering tapestries that garnished the walls, as with the condition of the inhabitants of the castle, Madame de Loménie informed me that at so advanced an hour of the evening, and in the uncertain state of the weather, she could not venture to return to the villa; and that having despatched messengers to Colorno, for our attendants and *déshabillé*, she had accepted hospitality for the night at Castel-Avrelino. Enchanted with the measure, for my life had been one of such deep seclusion that any variation was welcome, I threw myself down on a silken divan, protesting myself quite unequal to the fatigue of a second expedition; and the

fitful gusts of wind howling among the battlements served to confirm our mutual resolution.

"Monsieur du Fayel was too intimately versed in courtly ceremonial to propose a further intrusion upon our retirement; but the zeal with which his household furthered our wishes bore witness to his superintendence. The supper equipage withdrawn, a couch was prepared for Madame de Loménie beside my own splendid canopy; and our arrangements having been completed by the ladies of the wardrobe who had arrived with the requisite toilet, I besought Hermance to permit them to retire to rest in the anteroom, that we might pass one happy evening together, unmolested by etiquette or observation. Delighted with her acquiescence, I profited by this first freedom from restraint to commence a careful examination of our apartment. It was lofty, and evidently proportioned as a gallery; but at either end a *cabinet de toilette* had been subtracted, by a temporary partition, from its length. Opening by panelled arches into our sleeping-room, their massive outer doors appeared secured from without by brazen bolts. The stormy wind still

roared along the corridors; sometimes sharpening to a scream, sometimes rocking the dilapidated mansion with its fitful violence; and as the waving tapestry bore witness to its intrusive currents, Hermance had required a brasier to be placed on the capacious hearth. Half terrified by the inclemency of the night, I drew aside one of the brocaded draperies, and looked out upon the state of earth and sky with anxious scrutiny.

"The moon was nearly at its full; yet so frequently was it concealed by the heavy clouds hurrying over the heavens, — like stragglers hastening to rejoin the mighty tempest which had outstripped their speed,—that its uncertain light served but to perplex the eye. One moment the marble statues below, blanched into deadly whiteness by its beams, threw their long, black, cypress-like shadows athwart the terrace; the next, they appeared to vanish amid the general obscurity of the garden; while the huge branches of the forest creaked under the furious control of the night winds that impelled those wandering clouds, and their fleeting shades. Disheartened and oppressed, I drew towards the

side of Hermance, who was seated in contemplation of the decaying embers; and seizing a book from a table covered with the latest Parisian engravings and publications, I attempted to divert my attention from the ominous violence of the weather. Unfortunately I had selected a new romance full of tedious discussions upon the arts, and metaphysical examinations into every passing thought and feeling of its personages. The coarseness of its allusions too disgusted me; and throwing aside 'La Nouvelle Héloise' as unworthy of a woman's interest, I appealed to Hermance for better amusement.

" '*Chère Maman!*' said I, 'this desolate abode oppresses my heart. Talk to me,— tell me what you think of Monsieur du Fayel's inconsistent retreat.'

" '*That* were improvident, while we are still in the wolf's den,' replied Hermance, with a mournful smile. 'How know we what ears may loiter behind the arras?'

" 'And is it thus you try to re-assure me,' I replied. 'Look round upon this chamber,— divest it of its modern and incongruous decora-

tions,—and tell me whether it does not recall to your mind some manor of a darker age,—which the domestic tragedies of the Sforze and Medici have rendered so terrible to our apprehensions?'

"'We are under the protection of a nobleman of France, distinguished by the favour of its sovereign,' answered Madame de Loménie, without attempting to realize the impression I had foretold. 'Let me implore your Highness to retire to rest, instead of prolonging a day of anxiety and fatigue. You have constituted me for the night your lady of the robes; suffer me to offer my assistance.'

"My attention was now absorbed by the awkwardness of the *Dama soprantendente* in the duties of her new charge; but as I indulged in unconstrained laughter at her numerous *bévues*, the hollow echo of the vast solitary chamber seemed to reprove my levity.

"Dearest Christina!" resumed the Archduchess Joseph, after a pause of some minutes duration, "hitherto my relation has touched but upon the uneventful details of a life of seclusion —a life of Spanish royalty; and I thank you

for the friendly interest you have bestowed upon my egotism. But I have now something more than interest to seek, dear sister, at your hands; —you must grant me your indulgence,—your faith; you must enlarge your trust into a solemn assurance that what I am about to relate is neither a deception, nor a self-deception. Although inheriting with my Spanish blood, and perfecting by an Italian education, a degree of piety 'in all things too superstitious,' still believe me I have never indulged in mysticism; and if I rashly presumed to crave from the Almighty a manifestation of his divine protection, it was wholly without a hope that my prayers would be recorded. No! Christina; the event of that terrible night was no vision of a heated fancy,—no chimera of an excited mind; it was *too* real;—too truly—too horribly real.

"Ere we retired to rest, Madame de Loménie removed to the further extremity of the chamber, the solitary *veilleuse* by which it was to be enlightened for the night. She could not sleep, she said, if its glare visited her pillow, which was unshaded save by a moschito gauze; and the

caution was effectual, for very shortly after she had breathed her usual prayer and tender '*buona notte*,' I called to her and found that she was already sleeping. I attempted to close my eyes in my turn, but the effort was unsuccessful; my mind was stimulated by the novelty of my position, my frame was fevered by the indisposition of the morning; and instead of falling into my usual sweet forgetfulness, I kept starting up to trace the figures on the tapestry,—grim representations of the dying Seneca with his Paulina—wounded and ensanguined,—which the wind and the flickering lamp-light seemed to endow with life and motion. There was not the murmur of the river, as at Colorno, to lull me to repose; nor its familiar sights and sounds to render wakefulness endurable; but in their stead I was startled by the flapping of a distant shutter, loosened by the wind, or by the wind itself varying its melancholy voice unto unnumbered cadences.

"I would have given the world for the interposition of some living thing to disturb the weary silence of that vast lonely chamber;—a dog,—nay! a cricket on the hearth would have seemed

my friend. I buried my head in my pillow to shut out the sensation; but the beating of my heart was still audible to my apprehensions. I lay in this position many minutes—I thought them hours—agonized with a sense of solitude hitherto unknown; yet I was ashamed to waken Madame de Loménie solely to banish my puerile terrors.

"At length a sound did indeed break the spell of that horrible stillness,—but it was only to consummate the agony of my spirit!—a sound how silver-sweet,—how solemn in its bell-like modulation! how far outpassing the result of any earthly effort that has since greeted my ears!"

"Any *earthly* effort?" reiterated Maria Christina.

"Yes! my sister," continued the Archduchess Joseph, drawing closer to her side, and gently pressing her hand, while her voice subsided to a tremulous whisper! "yes! it was the heavenly announcement of that supernatural visitation for which my vain spirit had presumed to importune the throne of grace!—The night-lamp was sud-

denly extinguished, but the chamber remained not long in darkness!—From the lofty arch of one of its cabinets there issued a gradual emanation of pale blue light;—clearer than the moonshine, more subdued than the day;—like the symphonies by which its dawning was announced, it was faint at first,—swelling insensibly until it filled the chamber.—Awestruck, but fascinated and excited beyond description, I half rose from my couch, and fixed my intense gaze upon the spot whence it appeared to issue; when a film suddenly overspread its brilliancy, and clouds of fragrant vapour obscured the arch.—They dispersed at length; and a bright and beautiful landscape offered itself to my view!—

"It was France! I could not mistake its features,—its trim vineyards, unlike the wandering vines of Italy,—its corn-fields, its gay, joyous peasantry! The strain of a simple *chalumeau* was heard;—and a mellow voice accompanied the measure in praise of the pleasures which abound '*sous la coudrette.*' A group of village maidens seemed to traverse the vineyards, strewing the path with lilies, and breathing the tenderest

welcome, as a veiled figure lightly approached;—they called her Isabella,—and as she raised her veil, my own exact self was revealed in her features; smiling and joyous—but terrible in my sight as the confirming evidence of the truth of the vision,—I shrieked with horror! and in an instant the pageant vanished amid a prolonged murmur of those gracious songs of welcome.

"I called upon the name of Hermance,—she did not reply; then collecting my failing breath, I was about to spring from my couch and seek her side, when once again music appeared to hover upon the surrounding air. But the measures were different now; they were languid, and solemn, and like the sadness of a requiem, penetrated my very heart.—Again the fleecy vapours floated around,—again they melted away, and a new scene—a scene, how horribly impressive—offered itself to my recoiling observation! It was a Gothic cathedral, Christina; majestic as our own St. Stephen's,—gloomy, and vast, and dark with the breath of ages!—A solemn procession slowly paced its mighty aisle,—a solemn chant accompanied its approach; *it was a funeral!*—

"The sable banners and escutcheons that graced its pomp were emblazoned with the united heraldries of Austria and Parma,—Isabella's name was mingled with the funeral anthem,—Isabella's style was proclaimed beside that stately pall!—A fair child, a girl—even such a one, my sister, as sleeps in yonder bed,—was weeping among the mourners; she demanded her mother,—she required to be comforted!—And lo! importuned by her sorrow, they seized her little frame, and girding it in the vestments of the grave, they laid her low at Isabella's feet, within the vault of her ancestors.—Christina! as I live and breathe, and address you,—my words are words of truth; I saw all this plainly, as I now relate it; nay more! the mourner who headed the procession turning gravely towards me,—displayed your brother's countenance! As my words are recorded in heaven, I have never looked more distinctly upon my husband's face, than I did that night when the anthem 'Mourn for Isabella! mourn for the bride,—the mother,—for Austria's Isabella!' was faintly murmured in my failing ears.—Oh! my sister! forgive my emotion," con-

tinued the Archduchess, laying her head upon Christina's shoulder. "I cannot recall that fatal night without a renewal of my spirit's agony."

Of all the feelings conflicting within the bosom of Maria Christina, to one alone did she venture to give utterance.—Compassion, unfeigned and most affectionate pity for her afflicted sister's state of mind, commanded her earnest condolences and fond expostulations; for the reality of Isabella's terrors was manifested by her death-pale brow,—by her death-cold hand,—by the silent tears that stole unobserved over her marble face,—by the breath which came and went as if the struggle of her soul were too mighty for endurance.

"My dear, dear Isabella! console yourself," said she, fondly supporting and caressing her. "Friends are around you now,—no treachery will endanger or afflict you more. Calm yourself, sister! you are secure, happy, beloved,—the idol of a thousand hearts,—and better far than all,—the beloved of one exclusive and affianced bosom! Repress this pernicious agitation, and tell me, since the subject even now so deeply

moves you,—tell me how you were enabled to endure the actual presence of the vision?"

"I know not!—all that followed was vague and void. I know not how the night concluded, I only know that the daylight was shining upon my face, when I became once more conscious of existence. I raised my throbbing head, and found myself in a litter, with Madame de Loménie weeping by my side; and when we arrived at Colorno, I was removed to my own chamber, where for many, many weeks, a delirious fever confined me to my bed."

"And Don Philip,—Hermance,—the Count?"—

"My father tenderly and repeatedly visited me during my prolonged indisposition; and in one of my intervals of consciousness, I heard Madame de Loménie reply to his inquiries by an assurance that my illness proceeded from indiscreet exposure to the inclemency of the weather,—from a storm which had surprised me in the forest. Of our sojourn at Castel-Avrelino, as you may imagine, she said nothing to Don Philip; and as my attendants were all of her own selection, nothing transpired concerning our visit to the Comte du Fayel."

"But yourself,—Isabella? Surely you revealed to the knowledge of your second mother the unexampled event of that mysterious night?"

"I did indeed,—and oh! with what emotions of grief and terror! But Hermance, after listening attentively to my description, treated the whole as a vision,—as the first symptom of my approaching delirium. Even unto myself she insisted upon the storm as the origin of my disorder; and at length forbade me to renew a discussion so inconsistent with reason. But she saw that the impression was too deeply engraven in my heart to be easily effaced."

"But Madame de Loménie surely attempted by argument, by religious counsels, to obliterate its influence upon your feelings?"

"No! she foresaw that her mightiest efforts would have been vainly exerted. I was too well assured of my own perfect self-possession at the memorable moment which had revealed the measure of my destinies; and that persuasion not only retarded my recovery, but rendered life and health indifferent in my eyes. As soon as an imperfect restoration admitted of my removal,

we returned to Parma, whence all symptoms of contagion had disappeared. The court was assembled for the winter season; and when we arrived at the Palazzo Ducale, my father conducted me in person to my apartments, mingling in his affectionate caresses an air of triumph and gratulation. I was deeply penetrated by the emotions which, for the first time in my presence, disturbed the serenity of his lofty brow as he addressed me.

"'My Isabella!' said Don Philip, 'Heaven has furthered my hopes. The preliminaries of your union with the heir of the first empire in the world are already adjusted. Let me be the first,' he continued, kissing my resisting hand, 'to hail my beloved daughter as the future Empress of Germany.'

"I felt my father's proud heart beat as he fondly held me to his bosom. 'Pity me, sir,' I whispered. 'Pity me! this dreadful marriage is my sentence of death!'

"'Dearest child!' he replied, 'do not tarnish the brightness of this happy day, by fruitless repining! My royal word, Isabella, is pledged

for your acquiescence,—the alliance is now *inevitable!'* He imprinted a second kiss upon my forehead, nor perceived that it was already cold and senseless;—when he relinquished his embrace, I fell upon the marble floor, devoid of motion or consciousness.

"It was natural that my father and my household should attribute this revulsion to the abrupt intelligence of my approaching separation from him and home; and Hermance was prompt in bestowing a character of sensibility upon my undisguised suffering. But when sense and speech were again assigned me, I disdained this false interpretation of my conduct,—this temporizing compliance,—and ceased not to declare my abhorrence of the projected union, and my preference of a cloister in my native country.

"Madame de Loménie affected to moderate my vehemence; yet the regrets she constantly expressed that the Duc d'Orléans had been unable to make his overtures for my hand acceptable to Don Philip, served but to confirm my detestation of Austria, and of Austria's slandered Prince. She told me, and it was with tears, that

her cares for my education being now happily ended, she felt herself required to admit the claims of her own family and her own country upon the remnant of her days; and respectfully but firmly announced her determination of returning to Paris in the event of my marriage. 'But a few months past,' she added, 'I trusted that the matrimonial alliance projected between the Archduke Joseph and a daughter of France, would have permanently sealed the peace of Europe; and then my Isabella might have been herself restored to the beloved home of her mother; and as a princess of the Bourbon blood reunited by marriage to its royal line, would have graced, as she ought, the happy circles of Versailles.—We have now only to submit to the arbitrary disposal of our destinies.'

"But alas! while I listened to her lamentations over the menaced tranquillity of Europe, it was—I confess it to my dishonour—my *own* peace,—my *own* safety,—which occupied the cares of my trembling conscious heart,—which preyed upon my distempered mind. I breathed, however, no further complaining; I knew how

ill murmurs or prayers would serve my cause with Don Philip;—I had ascertained that his word was truly pledged unto the Austrian cabinet, and knowing it to be immutable, I sealed my lips in silence.

"Christina! from that first moment of submission until this, my bosom has never known the blessing of tranquillity. I endured the adulation,—the compliments of my father's court,—of your own delegated ministers, who evidently hailed me the most favoured of mortals. I left Parma, my sister,—I shed my last tears upon my father's cheek, and I knew that they *were* the last,—that I should never look upon his face again. I quitted my fertile Italy,—its clinging vines,—its caressing accents,—and I knew that I should return to it no more. I bore my withered heart into the land which I knew was soon to close over my grave,—into the embraces of a husband whom I regarded as an enemy,—and I bore it all patiently and uncomplainingly; I felt that my life was henceforward a vain thing! God had spoken unto my mental ear; and human words could find no entrance now.

"And oh! Christina,—you who regard love, mere mortal love, as so mighty a subjector of the heart,—imagine, if you can, the omnipotent control of *fear*,—the fear of death,—the fear of judgment!—Death, which approacheth so secretly, so silently, to every soul that liveth,—to me, and me only, hath foreshewn his terrors. The feet of other mortals are betrayed into his pitfalls;—but against *my* weak, defenceless bosom, his arm is visibly uplifted;—nor can I turn aside my gaze from the menacing aspect of his awful brow—from the fearful tribunal whither he would hurry my shrinking, trembling soul!

"Nor are these spiritual terrors my only or worst affliction. 'The *fear* of the Lord,' saith the inscribed word, 'is the beginning of wisdom;' and I should not repine if my submission to his will were thus secured. But it is not my spirit only which hath withered beneath the glance of the supernatural world; it is my heart—my heart—my heart of flesh—which, crushed and wounded by its might, renews from day to day my bitter torments.

"How can I indulge in those sweet impulses

of affection which I know would bind my struggling spirit unto earth, in its coming hour of departure? How can I presume to interpose the frailties of human tenderness between my heart and that bright eternity whose inheritance I would labour to win?—Christina! our God is a jealous God!—and will not vouchsafe to share our love with our fellows of the dust, — with the vile creatures of his hand!—

"I could have loved you all;—you who so tenderly welcomed your froward sullen sister unto her new country; from yourself, my chosen friend, unto the little Antoinette who springs so fondly into my arms, I could have cherished you all with the kindly tenderness of kindred. My indulgent husband too, who has dealt so forbearingly, so nobly with my estranged heart,— how warmly could I have returned his generous affection, had I dared to confide myself to the suggestions of my own feelings!

"And my child, Christina!—when the gentle murmurs of its living voice first reached my ear, — when its soft cheek was first proffered to my lips — then, then I felt how lovely life could be!

—and I spake harshly, and sent it from my presence, lest it should win back my softened heart to the joys of existence!—Sometimes even now, I watch its little dawning impulses of intelligence, and strain it closely, closely within my arms, forgetting how soon my sweet task must end,—forgetting that such passionate affection is sin in the sight of Heaven!—It must not be, sister! it must not be;—I dare not love the precious objects which embellish life;—or yonder dark repulsive vault would form a home too dreadful to my apprehensions.

"Oh! Christina—Christina!—reprove me not,—relax not your endearing caresses;—shun me not as selfish in my sorrow;—but fix your thoughts upon the responsibility of a mortal soul,—upon the struggle of a spirit about to abandon its weeds of clay,—upon the clinging of the reluctant mind unto the dust it hath learned to cherish! *I am to die!*—I know it! I am to fix my closing eyes upon that dear face which, from the first moment it smiled upon my wretchedness, hath looked on my faults with the indulgence of a tender forbearing love;—upon

that fair babe which so delights to nestle in my bosom, but which will soon lie by my cold side, uncaressing and uncaressed, within the grave! The worm will soon be my companion — the winding-sheet my garment! — *can* you, — *do* you marvel that my tears are so ready, — my soul so inaccessible to the common pleasures of the world?"

Christina indeed wondered not; — but she soothed the unhappy sufferer with the most devoted gentleness; and having persuaded her to retire to rest, she sat by her pillow till sleep visited her swollen eyelids. Meantime her own thoughts were not inactive. "I will yet," she whispered, "restore her to happiness, to my brother's ardent affection. All may yet be well, — if Heaven prosper my undertaking!"

CHAPTER VII.

Pour qui ne les craint pas, il n'est point de prodiges !
Ils sont l'appât grossier des peuples ignorans,
L'invention du fourbe,—et le mépris des grands.

VOLTAIRE.

THE Archduchess Maria Christina's secret solution of the mystery unfolded to her by the Infanta, was prompt and undoubting. Treachery —French treachery—instigated by the faction which had left no means untried to impose a daughter of the direct Bourbon line upon the young heir to the Austrian throne, had not hesitated to use measures, both lawful and unlawful, in order to thwart the projected alliance with Isabella of Parma. She was well aware that the recent treaty between Maria Theresa and Louis XV., had been effected by means scarcely less blamable; and chiefly through the medium of Madame de Pompadour.

But what a scene of baseness and ingratitude was thus unfolded to her view!—how cruel a betrayal on the part of the Comtesse de Loménie! who had profited by her intimate acquaintance with the lively imagination and enthusiastic devotion of her charge,—a charge committed by a dying mother into her hands,—in order to assure the wretchedness of her future life.—And Isabella,—the good, the gentle, the lovely Isabella!—what years of misery had been already apportioned to her heart by this wicked deception,—what evils might it not still entail upon her devoted head!—Indignant and irritated against the perpetrators of so gross an outrage, Christina for a single moment resolved to provoke the vengeance of the Empress against their crime. She knew that Hermance, now Comtesse du Fayel, held an appointment in the household of the Duchesse de Bourbon; and that the Conte Mignardi and his cold-blooded intriguing wife sustained with high honour the embassy of Parma at the French court. But although it had been easy to expose and punish their former unsuccessful villany, Christina scarcely dared conjecture how

far the discovery might implicate the inhabitants of Versailles; and dreading to endanger the league of amity which had been so dearly purchased by the Austrian cabinet, she determined to direct her labours solely towards the task of undeceiving and re-assuring the mind of the Archduchess Joseph.

By a fortunate coincidence it chanced that a series of optical delusions, aided by the magical effect of the musical glasses,—then a recent invention,—had been exhibited for her amusement the preceding winter at Prague. The artist, a young Saxon, who was said to be on his return from Italy where he had perfected himself under the instructions of the celebrated Cagliostro, had been particularly recommended to the protection of the Prince of Saxe-Teschen, himself a skilful experimentalist in those arts which direct the mightiest laws of nature towards pleasing and startling results. Christina had more than once been the spectator of scenes, which an adept such as Cagliostro or Schröpfer would have imposed as the triumph of the necromantic art. She remembered that young Melzer had been placed, under

Prince Albert's patronage, as master of the laboratory to Count Harrach at Vienna; and without the loss of a single hour she despatched a courier requiring his immediate attendance at Presburg; revealing the nature of the services sought at his hands in an exact repetition of the delusions executed at Castel-Avrelino; in order that he might provide himself with the machinery necessary for his purpose.

Before noon on the following day, Melzer had received his audience of final instruction from the Archduchess. He had brought with him a confidential attendant, and readily undertook the task assigned him.

"I need scarcely apprize your Imperial Highness," said he, "that an optical delusion such as you describe is among the legitimate objects of my art; and were I not apprehensive of trespassing too far on your indulgence, I could unfold a singular coincidence—but forgive me, Madam!—I am presuming beyond the bounds of your Imperial Highness's condescension."

"By no means," replied Maria Christina. "All you can relate on this topic is interesting to my curiosity."

"I allude, madam, to a service imposed upon me during my boyish attendance upon the self-styled Count Cagliostro. We were sojourning in Piacenza, when a nobleman of the country,—Mignardi unless my memory fails me was his name,—obtained a similar exhibition of the skill of my preceptor; and I had a material hand in the performance."

"At Castel-Avrelino—at Parma—in the royal forest?" exclaimed the Archduchess.

"At a half-ruined castle in some forest, madam," replied the astonished Melzer. "The delusion was projected for the diversion of a lady of the royal suite; but I heard not her name, and imperfectly understood the language. The whole design was however so singularly accordant with that imagined by your Imperial Highness, that"—

"Melzer!" exclaimed Maria Christina; "renew that scene,—repeat with scrupulous exactitude that very representation,—and claim two hundred ducats, and my gratitude for life, as your reward!—No thanks, sir!—but say, *when* can you effect the exhibition?"

"By to-morrow night, madam, unfailingly."

"To-morrow, be it then," replied the Archduchess, as she cheerfully left the chamber. "The gallery connecting with the Eastern turret is already placed at your disposal; and such of my household as can further our projects, wait your orders."

The whole of that day, the whole of the next, Christina betrayed a joyous flutter of spirit inconceivable to the Infanta, who had anticipated a kinder sympathy from her friend. But when the second evening came, the spirits of the Archduchess became suddenly depressed. She complained of *migraine;* and laughingly attributing her indisposition to loss of temper, she escaped from Isabella's side to visit the gallery in which Melzer's half-achieved preparations tantalized her eager wishes. The assistant whose services were indispensable to the performance, had been suddenly seized with severe illness; Melzer exhibited however, in order to appease the Archduchess, a sufficient specimen of the perfection of his phantasmagoria, to aggravate her impatience a thousand fold.

"Melzer!" said she, "I have heard that gold is a universal panacea. Let your invalid lend you at all risks his aid to-morrow evening, and he shall receive half the sum I have proffered to yourself."

And the evening came; and Maria Christina in an irrepressible agitation of mind, began her preparations by insinuating their intention to Isabella. "Be calm dearest sister," she whispered, "compose your feelings and attention while I reproduce with human aid before your eyes, a repetition of that which you falsely estimate as an interposition of Heaven. Seat yourself by my side, Isabella, suffer me to hold your hand within my own; and while Princess Lichtenstein thus soothes and supports you, summon your fortitude to endure a spectacle of which the mere physical sources shall afterwards be offered to your inspection."

Isabella startled and perplexed, obeyed the request. As the first bell-like chiming of the harmonica struck upon her ear, a vivid blush of astonishment overspread her face; and when the odorous vapours gave place to the smiling land-

scape — to its songs, — its tripping joyous peasantry — its representation of herself, — her amazement and agitation overpowered her; when the filmy clouds again interposing, the pageant vanished as it came.

As soon as the emotion of the Infanta had in some degree subsided, "My dear sister," said Christina, "it would be as easy to my agents to place before your eyes the second part of the deception which formerly produced so strong an impression upon your mind, as this first attempt; our preparations to that effect wait but your orders. I am myself, however, unwilling to sanction so solemn a representation in mere levity. The rites for the dead can scarcely be thus portrayed without sacrilege; and if you will permit me, I would rather direct your attention towards the apparatus by which these seemingly supernatural effects have been produced."

Isabella, leaning upon Princess Lichtenstein, was now introduced to the interior of Melzer's little theatre; she saw and assisted in the spectral representation of herself, by means of the portrait

finished after Christina's sketch, and a certain disposition of convex glasses. With her own hand she produced those mystical tones which she had so long believed of Heavenly origin; with her own hand she kindled those brasiers whose blue glimmering light and intoxicating perfume she had attributed to enchantment. Melzer and his co-adjutor were indefatigable in pointing out the facilities which similar toys of science afford to the artful and interested for subjecting the minds of the uninitiated. The Infanta, transported beyond herself by these consolatory discoveries, again and again embraced her beloved sister, her best of friends,—her preserver; but when Maria Christina called upon Melzer to declare the part he had taken in the scene of Castel-Avrelino, and when he confirmed the authenticity of his recital by a thousand local details which could not have been suggested to him by his patroness, the Infanta bursting into tears gave vent to the bitterest sorrow.

"Hermance,—whom I so loved and reverenced,—to practise thus upon my weakness!" she

exclaimed, "what cruelty,—what humiliation in the thought!" Then warmly expressing her thanks to young Melzer, and her gratitude to Heaven for the chance which had placed his skill at her disposal, she took two valuable rings from her finger and presented them as tokens of her goodwill to the artists.

Accompanied by her sister and her friend Krescentie Lichtenstein, the Infanta was now about to leave the gallery of which the doors had been guarded by the ushers of the court, when they were suddenly thrown open, and the Archduke was announced. He had accompanied the Duke of Saxe-Teschen in a tour through Moravia; and now on his return to Laxenburg, was come to claim his wife and re-conduct her to Vienna.

"There are tears on this cheek, my Isabella," whispered Joseph as he clasped her in his arms. "Yet you promised me, Christina, that no sorrow should come near her while I left her in your charge!"

"Nor has she deceived you! These tears are tears of joy—of repentance!—repentance, love,

that I have hitherto so ill-repaid the tenderness you have lavished upon your froward wife;—joy, that time may yet be accorded me to repair my error. Is my love, my grateful affection still precious in your sight?—receive it,—accept it,—not as a gift, but as the humble offering of my gratitude."

"What miracle is this!" exclaimed the Archduke, with quivering lips and sparkling eyes. "Isabella! do not deceive me, even in kindness; —you are rendering existence too precious in my eyes!"

"I do not deceive you," whispered Isabella, again. "I deceived you only when I affected indifference to your attachment,—coldness to your generous devotion. I have not, I believe, to *learn* to love,—I have only to learn that the tenderness of a wife may be cherished and acknowledged without shame."

The rapture with which these confessions were hailed by the Archduke may be easily conjectured. Accompanied by Maria Christina and her astonished husband, Isabella now conducted Joseph to the chamber of their sleeping child; and over its pillow renewed with solemn and deep

emotion, her expressions of contrition for her former selfish estrangement, and assurances of the most unqualified devotion to their affections for the future. Again her tears of joy and gratitude interrupted her declarations;—and this time she wept not alone!—

The following day, when the departure of the Archduke and Archduchess Joseph gave leisure for the indulgence of Maria Christina's calmer reflexions, she could scarcely realize to herself the unanticipated success that had crowned her efforts. She was well aware that in restoring to her beloved brother the cheerfulness and tenderness of his wife, she had gifted him with a treasure richer than richest Ind could supply; and she was equally persuaded that in re-awakening in the bosom of the Infanta a security of life, she had only placed within her power of enjoyment the blameless and most hallowed pleasures of existence. Herself on the eve of a journey to Vienna, and confident in the perfect happiness of those who were so dear to her, she neither sought nor received tidings of Isabella for many days; but contented herself with revealing to her hus-

band the singular discoveries originating the scene that greeted his return to Presburg, and with applying herself to the completion of the portrait, which she was anxious to present to the Empress on her ensuing visit, as a memorial of both her daughters.

On the sixth morning after the departure of the Infanta, the Archduchess was occupied with Countess Czernin in the repetition of a duet from Gluck's Rinaldo, when her husband suddenly entering the music room, gravely requested her to desist from her employment. "You will agree with my feelings, I am persuaded," said he, "that the sound of music is just now unbecoming in the castle. The viaticum is on the point of being administered to one of its inmates."

"How!" exclaimed Christina, "and I knew not that there was even sickness within our gates."

"The sufferer has not been the less cared for on my part; but I was apprehensive of alarming you with the intelligence that the smallpox appeared upon Melzer's young pupil, the very day following his interview with the Archduchess."

"Great Heaven!" shrieked Christina, "and our precious Isabella has never had the disorder. She spoke to him,—received several objects from his hands,—probably inhaled his very breath.—Her doom is sealed! I have murdered my sister by my rashness,—for I knew of his indisposition."

"Be calm, dearest Christina"—

"Tell me," interrupted the Archduchess, "tell me truly,—have you received any tidings from Vienna,—are you already aware that the Infanta has shewn symptoms of the contagion?"

"On my honour no! I have received no single word of intelligence on the subject; but that very silence is ominous. Our best measure, both for Isabella's safety and our own release from suspense, will be to depart instantly for Lachsenburg."

"Rather for Vienna,—the court was to remove, three days since, for the winter." Then turning towards Countess Czernin, the Archduchess implored her to expedite their departure by achieving every necessary preparation, and by arranging that the carriages should follow her to the gates of the cathedral. "Come with

me," she continued, seizing her husband's arm. "Come with me, Albert,—on foot,—unobserved; —let our prayers for her safety ascend together from the foot of the altar."

Albert of Saxe-Teschen, scarcely less afflicted than his wife, silently conducted her down the heights of the Zuckmantel to the Dome Church of the city. Unnoticed, for in their private walks at Presburg, etiquette exacted that they should pass unrecognized, they bent their agitated steps towards that high altar so appropriately graced by the equestrian bronze statue of St. Martin — as the patron of a race of warriors. And oh! how fervently were breathed their prayers for his intercession,—with what vows— what offerings, did Christina appeal to Heaven for mercy upon her suffering sister!

At length, comforted but still weeping, she threw herself into the carriage, recommending speed to her attendants; and notwithstanding that, in obedience to her commands, the horses scarcely appeared to touch the ground, the cloudy mists of a November evening already veiled the lofty spire of St. Stephen's, as they traversed the Rennweg, and approached the palace.

The carriage passed the archway of the *Burg Platz;* where, pausing at the eastern entrance leading to the Archduke's apartments, the Duke of Saxe-Teschen alighted to obtain some preliminary information. A few minutes brought him back to the agonized Christina; but unable to endure the suspense, she was already ascending the great stairs leaning on her astonished chamberlain.

"You must prepare yourself for the worst," said he, tenderly drawing her arm within his own. "Our apprehensions are fatally verified. Three evenings ago, Isabella, on approaching the city from Lachsenburg, was seized with a shivering fit; and Van Swieten, who was summoned on her arrival at the palace, has not since left her side. My dearest Christina, our poor sister has given birth to a dead infant, and the smallpox has already declared itself."

"And my mother!" exclaimed Christina. "The Empress must surely be endangered by this horrible event;--she is not like myself secured by having passed through this dreadful disorder."

"Maria Theresa will not be suffered to approach Isabella's apartments; but the Archduke, night or day, has not quitted his beloved sufferer."

"Thank Heaven my arrival will in some degree divide his cares, and alleviate his distress!"

"Nay! dearest Christina," said Albert, resisting her entry into the chamber, "you are at present unequal to the agitation of encountering such a scene."

"How, Albert!—I who have destroyed her—would you have *me* shrink from the spectacle of her affliction?—No—no! let my faithful and untiring services atone for my error."

The ushers now threw open the doors of the ante-room, as the clashing salute of the sentinels without, announced the arrival of one of the Imperial family; and Christina, having despatched a chamberlain to demand an interview with Princess Lichtenstein, hastily traversed the almost deserted chambers. "Oh! Krescentie!" she exclaimed, throwing herself upon the bosom of the Princess, who advanced weeping to meet her—"say! may I yet presume to hope?"

"The disorder of her Imperial Highness is alas! pronounced to be of a most malignant kind,—her own enfeebled position is against her; and Van Swieten and Jaquin have, from the first moment, appeared desponding."

Let it be remembered that at the period in question the smallpox, unmitigated even by the art in use among their barbarous Turkish neighbours, was held by the Austrians as secondary only to the plague. The grandfather of the reigning Empress had expired, wrapped by order of the faculty of his capital, in twenty yards of scarlet broadcloth; and the same mode of treatment terminated the existence of eleven members of the Imperial family under the disorder, within fifty years. If not *pronounced* incurable, it was commonly *proved* to be so.

Princess Lichtenstein, with many a maternal word of preparation to the young Archduchess, now conducted her into the chamber adjoining that of Isabella; and pointing to the coffin of the little infant, whose birth had disastrously confirmed their calamity, she bad her mark how, amid the general confusion, it had still been

surrounded with the paraphernalia that decorates a royal bier. "Let me not look upon its face," said the weeping Christina. "It hath proved the herald of misfortune."

She hushed her light footsteps as she entered the chamber of her sister, which was heated to a temperature mortal to the invalid; and as she stole to the couch, a laugh, a hoarse horrid laugh greeted her ears. "It is herself," whispered Krescentie, replying to Christina's look of terror. "For many hours she has been delirious."

The first object that presented itself, was the kneeling figure of the Archduke, fixed and motionless beside the bed. There was not a tear,—not a struggle upon his youthful face. He neither spoke nor murmured; despair seemed to have turned him into marble. Not so the sufferer! Her long raven hair was floating loosely round her shoulders,—her whole frame was agitated by the intense fever of her suppressed distemper; she had raised herself from her pillow, and was flinging her arms wildly above her head, laughing and shrieking by turns.

"Go—go!—Du Fayel," she vehemently ex-

claimed. "Go, cruel Hermance! you are no longer my mother,— I disclaim you — I am the child of Austria,— the daughter of the Empress! No grave now for Isabella,— no requiem,— no emblazoned pall! I shall live — live — live — to be happy,— to be beloved.—I have a child, a husband;— their prayers will preserve me.—No grave now for Isabella."—

Maria Christina stood riveted to the spot, contemplating this dreadful spectacle.

"Is there no hope?" she murmured to the venerable Van Swieten, whose moistened eyes were fixed upon the terrible aspect of the young Prince, so precious to the vows of Germany.

"Alas! Madam, how can I answer you?" said the old man mournfully. "God is good!— let us trust that he will enable us to do our best."

From that period, through the day, and through the night, Maria Christina relaxed not from her attendance, nor quitted for a single hour the chamber of sickness,— *the chamber of death!* The disease now broke out with disfiguring virulence upon the person of Isabella;

and as the fever subsided, her consciousness was restored; but the approach of the last agony already oppressed her respiration.

"My husband!" she faltered, fixing her languid gaze upon Joseph. "Is it indeed you who have watched so tenderly by my pillow? My best beloved!—how shall I thank your kindness; my breath is spent—my sight failing.—I cannot ask you to kiss these festering lips,—to press this loathsome hand!—But my heart springs forth to yours to bid you farewell.—I am young to be torn from life,—from you whose affection was about to render life so dear;—but my dying heart is filled with resignation to God, with charity and gratitude for those I leave behind.—

"My father,—Joseph!—commend me to my dear father, and tell him he judged wisely for my happiness in the disposal of my destiny; bid my brother cherish our Amelia for my sake,—and implore the Empress,—my tender friend and mother,—to recommend me in her prayers to heaven.

"Christina!—Krescentie!—you will watch over my little daughter;—and when the day shall

come that my husband will try to recall my parting words, tell him I bad him live,— I bad him be happy,—but without banishing from his heart the remembrance of the wife of his youth."

A time-piece that decorated the chamber,—a splendid gift from Louis to his grandchild, which had never been wound up since its arrival in Vienna,—now, through some disorder of its mechanism, repeatedly struck the hour.

"It is my summons!" murmured the dying Isabella. "So,—raise me;—yet more and more. I see you not, my husband,—but I feel that you are near me still.—Receive me—Heavenly Father! receive me to thy mercy!"

She turned her glassy eye upon the Archduke, and her gentle spirit was released from its polluted human mould.

Joseph, stung to madness, threw himself upon the disfigured corse; and as neither prayers nor remonstrances could prevail upon him to abandon his perilous post, his chosen friends Count Cobenzel and the hero Lacy, were admitted by the desire of Maria Theresa into the chamber of death, and forcibly withdrew him from the body.

Thus, at the age of twenty-two, perished the Infanta of Parma;—thus did a vague prophecy become accidentally its own fulfilment. Ere the gloomy days of November expired, a solemn procession traversed the aisle of the Augustiner church; which scarcely three years before, had been gladdened by the marriage vows of the Archduchess. And the requiem resounded through the arched roofs, saying, "Mourn for Isabella,—the bride,—the mother! Mourn for Austria's Isabella!"

It is now five years since I completed a tale founded upon Wraxall's sketch of the death of the Archduchess Joseph. On visiting Vienna last winter, I was anxious to procure some further anecdotes of my heroïne,—but in vain. Her very name appeared forgotten; and the sole records of her existence which came to my knowledge, were her sarcophagus, placed between the little silver coffins of her two children, in the Imperial vault beneath the convent of the Capuchins,—and a very singular panel in one of the saloons of Schönbrunn, which represents the nuptial ceremonies of the Emperor Joseph. The portrait of the Infanta painted by Maria Christina is in the possession of the Archduke Charles, who has inherited the immense wealth of Albert of Saxe-Teschen. It is remarkable that although Joseph continued to his last hour to cherish the memory of Isabella, and to wear her picture concealed within his watch, he exhibited from the moment of her death a rooted antipathy to Christina, who had been her bosom friend. Upon this hint, I have assigned a cause, purely

imaginary, for the melancholy of the Infanta; but I have in other respects followed the memoirs of the times, particularly those of Wraxall; who relates several touching expressions used by Isabella,—her predictions concerning her own death and their accomplishment,—the irregular striking of the clock and her gloomy inference. He mentions her indeed by her baptismal name of Elizabeth; which, in a Spanish court, naturally became *Isabella.* I have antedated by a year or two the marriage of the Archduchess Christina.

I take this occasion to apologize for a too frequent use of foreign idioms,—and for having occasionally placed quotations from English authors in the mouths of Hungarians. I trust they will be considered as forms of speech, familiarized to our ears by constant use, rather than as quotations.

The following stanzas were written after my visit to the grave of Isabella of Parma; and may not inappropriately terminate her history:—

Here ends thy dream!—How oft mine own
Vague wandering thoughts with thee have dwelt!
Striving to know what thou hast known,—
Striving to feel what thou hast felt;—
I've fancied thee in stately vest,
I've fancied thee in palace proud,
I've fancied thee beloved — caressed,—
I find — a solitary shroud!

I've lent thee sorrows never thine,
I've taught thy lips unspoken words;
Such lips — like lutes — have tones divine
Let storm or zephyr sweep the chords!
Yet wherefore tear aside the veil
Which dull Oblivion's hand so long
Had thrown in pity o'er thy tale
Of loveless youth—of sinless wrong?—

'T was that I held thee but a *name*,
And not a thing of life and breath;
While *here* thy coffined relics claim
The stern reality of death!
Thy babes beside thee — sleeping low—
Thyself all lonely and forgot,
None save a vagrant stranger now
To grieve or ponder o'er thy lot;



'T is all so true — so dark — so dread —
That Fancy's dream, rebuked and chill,
Fades in the presence of the dead,
And bends as to their living will.
Rest, Isabella, rest ! Thou hast
Thy children through the grave's long night
Beside thee, to atone the past
And gild thy sepulchre with light !

THE END.

Printed by S. Manning & Co., London House Yard.